VISIT…

Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City*

Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* instantly, markedly, and permanently changed the landscape of film history. Made at the end of World War II, it has been credited with initiating a revolution in and reinvention of modern cinema, bold claims that are substantiated when its impact on how films are conceptualized, made, structured, theorized, circulated, and viewed is examined. This volume offers a fresh look at the production history of *Rome Open City*; some of its key images, particularly those representing the city and various types of women; its cinematic influences and affinities; the complexity of its political dimensions, including the film's vision of political struggle and the political uses to which the film was put; and the legacy of the film in public consciousness. It serves as a well-illustrated, up-to-date, and accessible introduction to one of the major achievements of filmmaking.

Sidney Gottlieb is Professor of Media Studies at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. He has edited *Hitchcock on Hitchcock: Selected Writings and Interviews* and *Framing Hitchcock: Essays from the Hitchcock Annual*, and serves as Co-Editor of the *Hitchcock Annual*.

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Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City*

Edited by

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I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity, courtesy of the series editor, Andy Horton, whose patience and good humor know no bounds – I know because I tested them to the extreme – to continue my still far from completed education in Italian cinema by working with the contributors to this volume. My respect for their knowledge and thoughtfulness is matched by my gratitude for their generous tolerance of my, shall I say, editorial enthusiasm. If I can't thank them enough, I can at least thank them again: Thank you Peter, Penny, Marcia, and David.

I wish I could also thank Mike Rogin again, but he died suddenly in November 2001, as this book was being revised. When I first contacted him, he was somewhat shy about contributing an essay

because, he explained, Italian cinema was not his primary field. But as it turned out, one of the great joys of working with him was that he was not shy about sharing his tremendous personal warmth as well as his far-ranging inquisitiveness and uncanny intelligence as we corresponded and as the essay and the volume took shape. The shock of his death lingered while I was completing the book, and I will now always associate *Open City* with a deep sense of mourning, and not only because that is the focal point of his remarkable interpretation of the film.

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SIDNEY GOTTLIEB

Introduction

Open City: Reappropriating the Old, Making the New

Like only a handful of other works – *Birth of a Nation* (1914), *Potemkin* (1925), *Citizen Kane* (1941), and *Breathless* (1960) come most readily to mind – Roberto Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* (1945; hereafter referred to in my essay simply as *Open City*) instantly, markedly, and permanently changed the landscape of film history. It has been credited with helping to initiate and guide a revolution in and reinvention of modern cinema, bold claims that are substantiated when we examine its enormous impact, even to this day, on how films are conceptualized, made, structured, theorized, circulated, and viewed. But the film has attained such a mythic power and status that we must be careful not to give in to uncritical enthusiasm. To combat this tendency (as well as to analyze and celebrate the film's perpetual appeal) the present volume is designed as "revisionary," offering a fresh look at the production history of *Open City*; some of its key images (particularly its representation of the city and various types of women); its cinematic influences and influence on later films; the complexity of its political dimensions (including the film's vision of political struggle and the political uses to which the film was put); and the legacy of the film in public consciousness.

Occasionally the effect – and, in fact, the intention – of this reexamination is to demythologize certain aspects of the film and the legends that surround it. For example, several of the essays herein note the various ways that *Open City* bears many traces of the kind of cinema it intends to replace – perhaps supporting the somewhat deflating argument that Rossellini was in fact no thoroughgoing

innovator, but perhaps also indicating that no revolution can proceed *ex nihilo*, and that innovation frequently rests on dialectical continuity and reappropriation rather than clean slates and completely new beginnings. And despite *Open City*'s reputation as a watershed moment, not only in Rossellini's development as one of the quintessential modern filmmakers, but also in the emergence of a distinctive and reinvigorated postwar cinema in general, each one of the essays calls attention to unresolved tensions, gaps, contradictions, and loose ends in the film that keep it from being entirely coherent, progressive, and politically and aesthetically consistent. The overall effort, though, is not to undermine but to reaffirm the extraordinary power and ongoing importance of *Open City*, and fine-tune our awareness of how it unquestionably and effectively challenges conventional films, filmmaking practices, and experiences of film by offering an alternative to the classical, Hollywood-dominated, corporate-industrial model of a cinema of distractions, gloss, high profitability, and low seriousness.

ROSSELLINI: BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Roberto Gastone Zeffiro Rossellini was born on May 8, 1906, in Rome and had many reasons to describe his childhood as "easy" and "very happy."[1] He grew up in a prosperous and loving family, surrounded by servants, material comforts, and intellectual and artistic stimulation – the latter especially provided by his father, a designer and builder, resolute liberal (during a time when liberalism was often blamed for the country's many problems), dedicated though not very successful writer, and host of a long-standing weekly salon. Rossellini remembered his home as "full of joy and fantasy," but also recalled being "at odds with the world" from "the moment I was born."[2] What might otherwise seem like an idyllic youth was marked by long periods of illness and increasing restlessness, boredom, self-indulgence, and inquisitiveness, all, as it turns out, key elements of his character and, perhaps not surprisingly, his cinematic art.

It is difficult to know exactly how and why he gravitated to a career in filmmaking. Initially, he resisted gravitating to a career in anything and spent most of his time, once he dropped out of school,

living off money from his family and earning a reputation as a free spirit (and spender), fast car driver (at a time when cars were scarce), and romantic adventurer involved in many erotic affairs as well as a quickly annulled marriage to a young actress, Assia Noris. He married, more seriously this time, Marcella De Marchis on September 26, 1936. Perhaps he was settling down a bit. A few years earlier, he had run through his inheritance and, forced to work for a living, turned to the film industry. This may have been a reluctant choice: As he pointed out in a later interview, "Before that I had a nicer job, that of a son, which I liked much better."[3] But it was also a logical step: he had a variety of friends in the business; he had screenplay writing experience, which made him some money and gave him a foot in the door and further contacts in this growing (and government-supported) enterprise; and he found that filmmaking allowed him to pursue much that was dear to him, including his interest in mechanics, his unconventional and still far from settled lifestyle, and what he described as his "zest to understand," a "predominant theme" in his works from the very beginning.[4]

Rossellini's apprenticeship took many forms: he was a sound technician, helping to dub foreign films into Italian; a piecework contributor to various screenplays; an assistant director; and the writer and director of a series of his own self-financed short films blending documentary and fantasy. His most substantive early work was collaborating on the screenplay and, according to some sources, directing parts of Goffredo Alessandrini's *Luciano Serra, pilota* (1938), one of the key films of Fascist-era cinema. This was followed by three films he directed, often referred to as his "fascist trilogy": *La nave bianca* (*The White Ship*, 1941), *Un pilota ritorna* (*A Pilot Returns*, 1942), and *L'uomo dalla croce* (*The Man of the Cross*, 1943). In his essay in this volume, Peter Bondanella, without suggesting that Rossellini was a fascist ideologue, argues persuasively for the multilevel continuity among these films and the ones that follow, and in general emphasizes the deep roots of antifascist neorealist cinema in some of the developing "tendencies" in Fascist-era cinema. But there is no disputing the fact that Rossellini's next three films, his so-called "war trilogy," mark a decisive breakthrough in his career and in modern film history: *Open City*, *Paisà* (*Paisan*, 1947), and *Germania anno*

zero (*Germany Year Zero*, 1947) established Rossellini as one of the "fathers" of neorealism and helped move Italian films to the forefront of modern cinema, both critically and commercially.

If he was one of the founders and key representatives of neorealism, Rossellini was also one who refused to be bound by any cinematic template. As I argue in my essay in this volume, even his "classic" neorealist works like *Open City* challenge neorealist (as well as other cinematic, political, and moral) orthodoxies, and his films after the "war trilogy" do so even more relentlessly. Not entirely unintentionally, he generated tremendous controversy, and not just in circles where the nuances and future direction of neorealism and Italian cinema were hotly debated. *Il miracolo* (*The Miracle*, 1948) was widely attacked as blasphemous, and even though it was the focal point of a successful fight against film censorship in America, it helped to brand Rossellini, at least in some circles, as a dangerous character. And he made front-page news for his personal life as well: after seeing and being deeply moved by *Open City* and *Paisan*, Ingrid Bergman wrote him a letter, offering to make a film with him, and this was the first step in what was to many a scandalous love affair. They subsequently married, had three children together, and made five films that mark a definable period in Rossellini's career: the "Bergman films," including *Stromboli* (1949), *Europa '51* (1952), and *Voyage to Italy* (1953), were commercial failures but dazzling explorations of spiritual distress and failures in communication that solidified his appeal to a new generation of cineastes, especially those gathered around the influential journal, *Cahiers du cinéma*, and helped lay the foundation for cinematic revolutions that we now associate with the French New Wave directors and Italian modernists like Antonioni.

Rossellini never lost his interest in historical subjects: *Il generale Della Rovere* (*General Della Rovere*, 1959) and *Era notte a Roma* (*It Was Night in Rome*, 1960) revisit the war period, examining recurrent issues for Rossellini of fear, loyalty, entrapment, and the ironies of heroic conduct; and *Viva l'Italia* (1960) and *Vanina Vanini* (1961) chronicle events from the pivotal Risorgimento era, a recurrent reference point in the continuing drive for liberty in twentieth-century Italy. But his idea of historical cinema was changing: he was shifting toward a new medium, television, which offered him a new audience

and stable source of funding and technical support no longer available to him in the commercial cinema; he was turning to new subjects from various parts of the world – India, for example, which he traveled to and filmed extensively in 1957 – and a wide range of time periods – the age of Louis XIV, for example, in a film of 1966, and the age of the apostles in a film of 1968; and he was broadening his approach to history, focusing on pivotal moments that represented important shifts in human consciousness as well as long views, durational histories, if you will, that portrayed such things as the centuries-long age of iron (*L'eta del ferro*, 1963) and the perennial human struggle for survival (*La lotta dell'uomo per la sua sopravvivenza* [1967–69]).

The last twelve years or so of Rossellini's career were his most prolific, aided by his increasingly characteristic use of long takes and a zoom lens, which allowed him to film quickly. This period is his least accessible and appreciated, but must be reckoned with to understand fully what Bondanella describes as Rossellini's lifelong but especially late dedication to "cinema as a didactic tool."[5] He tried to further this project not only in his final films, intended to bring large numbers of people into vital and life-changing contact with key historical events and figures, such as Pascal (1972), Saint Augustine (1972), Descartes (1973), and Jesus (1975), but also by his many interviews and writings on film; his activities as the director of Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (1968–73), the Italian state-sponsored film school; and his connections with scientists and media technicians and theorists at Rice University in the United States. When Rossellini died of a heart attack on June 3, 1977, his best and most influential films were several decades and more behind him, but he was still at work on projects that consolidate and enhance his legacy as one of the visionaries and builders of a cinema of analysis, education, provocation, and inspiration.

CRITICAL OVERVIEW OF *OPEN CITY*

Near the beginning of her essay in this volume, Marcia Landy includes a very useful brief summary of *Open City* (pp. 87–88), which the reader unacquainted with the film may turn to for a quick orientation. What I offer in this section is a somewhat more detailed

overview, setting out the main lines of the plot but also attempting to broaden and to some extent complicate the way we look at the film by paying particular attention to its rhetoric and aesthetic techniques as well as its realism, carefully designed structure and repeated allusions to other films, and remarkable acts of reappropriation in service of the "springtime for Italy" it prophecies and attempts to usher in.

Even before the action of the film begins, we are provided with important information by the title and credit sequence. The working title, *Yesterday's Stories*, highlights the immediacy and relevance of the plot, but the final title, *Rome Open City*, is more resonant and specific. It associates what we will see with a well-known genre: this is a "city" film, treating Rome as not only a literal setting but as a living entity, in some ways, as Millicent Marcus notes, "the protagonist of the story" as well as a real and symbolic space that will be traversed, examined, contested, and reclaimed.[6] A key part of the cityscape appears behind the title and credits (although not in the American release version), including the dome of St. Peter's cathedral, which reappears in the background in the closing sequence as well, the first of many repetitions and echoes that are woven into the film (see Fig. 13).[7] The title alludes to a precise historical period in 1943–44, after the fall of Mussolini but before the Allies completed their successful march through the country, when the Germans agreed to designate Rome as "open," in effect demilitarized and not subject to occupation, attack, or military control. They disregarded this agreement literally as soon as it was made and proceeded to inhabit and rule the city with the kind of brutality documented in the film, but also attempted to use this designation to shield themselves from Allied attack. Rossellini counts on the fact that his audience would acknowledge the obvious irony and duplicity here, but from beginning to end the film also works on a much deeper and broader level to define what true "openness" entails: a shared personal capacity to accept and transcend some social and political differences and disagreements to establish not only an effective opposition to fascism but a lasting fair and inclusive community, and a cinematic style "open" to basic human needs and able to capture without distortion the often messy and unpredictable reality that rarely figured in conventional films.

The film begins with German soldiers marching in lockstep through a dark street in the city they have occupied, singing a strident military song about their homeland. (The film will end reversing this image, with a group of Italian boys walking silently, but with a stirring orchestral accompaniment in the background, comforting each other in pairs as they move toward the brightly lit city they are in the process of restoring.) The first segment of Rossellini's next film, *Paisan*, actually includes a reference to its dark setting as "like Frankenstein's castle." Nothing like this is specified in *Open City*, but the huge stone building rising up in the shadows in the background immediately places us in the realm of horror. The "monsters" are not supernatural demons but Nazi functionaries, monstrous enough as they carry submachine guns into an apartment and tower over two old women, searching for a man they identify as Giorgio Manfredi. Manfredi, though, looking like a man on the run in a classic mystery film, has already escaped across the rooftop: agility and mobility as well as endurance prove to be defining marks of the members of the Resistance.

The scene dissolves to the office of the commanding officer of the Germans, Major Bergmann, and Rossellini quickly summarizes the Nazi character, mentality, and method. Bergmann is, to be sure, part caricature, played as an effete and blasé sadist, mincing as he parades around in his administrative domain (we never see him outside) and wincing in annoyance when the torture he ordered causes too much noise for his refined sensibility. He is also part cinematic villain: when he sits at his desk, holds up a series of photographs, and tells the Italian police commissioner how he uses a far-reaching surveillance network to travel through and control the city, he bears an unmistakable resemblance to Fritz Lang's master criminal, Dr. Mabuse. Rossellini adds to this impression of villainy by putting dark shadows across the top of Bergmann's head, as well as that of the commissioner. But along with these stylized touches, Rossellini also begins to build up a picture of a dangerous force that cannot simply be hissed off the stage: the scream of the tortured professor, which will be echoed later by Manfredi's screams, is shockingly real, and is only one of a series of accumulating details that break through the screen, as it were, and remind the audience less of cinematic Mabuses and imaginary houses of horror than real-life tyrants like Gestapo commander

Herbert Kappler, one of the recognizable models for Bergmann, and infamous places of interrogation and torture like the one in the German embassy at 155 Via Tasso.

Bergmann wants to break the unity of the Italian people – the sight of him standing in front of a map of Rome explaining his plan to divide the city into fourteen sectors (see Fig. 14) would presumably be a dramatic reminder to an Italian audience that the Nazis stand for everything that the revered nineteenth-century revolutionary movement, the Risorgimento, successfully fought against – an Italy of fragments, hardly an Italy at all – and smugly argues that the city can be contained (closed rather than opened) by surveillance and terror. As if to counter these claims, Rossellini dissolves to a scene that illustrates how the city will not be so easily controlled. An angry and hungry crowd of people, mostly women, has stormed a bakery and "liberated" it of bread. Rossellini uses comic touches but also direct explanatory statements by some of the participants to carefully establish that this action is not spasmodic, unprincipled, and violent – at least insofar as it does not hurt anyone physically – but just and necessary during times of great need. This scene also introduces us to Pina, evidently one of the instigators of the "celebration" at the bakery, and alerts us from the very beginning that this woman is not only at the emotional and moral but also the political heart of the film. There is some bantering later among the children about whether or not "girls" can be heroes and effective parts of the Resistance movement. Pina's example settles the issue definitively, although the film also dramatizes that not everyone, woman or man, can live up to her high standards.

Here as elsewhere in the film, Rossellini frequently moves from one scene to another with a vertical wipe. This technique, where one image is replaced by another moving across the frame, is commonplace in early action-adventure and mystery films, reinforces an episodic structure, and quickens the pace by leaving out shots that are merely transitional and establishing, concentrating our attention on what is dramatically essential. But these quick shifts and ellipses in *Open City* are balanced by more drawn-out sequences that call our attention to other essential, although not necessarily dramatic, actions. Several wipes help Rossellini move Pina from the bakery back to her apartment, but when she meets Manfredi, who is looking for

Francesco, his friend and Pina's fiancé, time seems to expand as they get to know one another, moving from initial distrust to friendship and even intimacy as they discuss important and inevitably personal matters (talk about politics flows naturally into talk about love). It is very interesting to see how Rossellini decides what is "essential" and what is not: he uses a wipe to compress even further the time it takes Pina's son, Marcello, to walk down a short flight of stairs as she asks him to go out on an errand, but while Pina and Manfredi are talking, Rossellini holds a shot patiently, even as Pina walks out of the frame and then back in with coffee. An important bond is forming between them, and Rossellini does not hurry them – or us – through the process.

Manfredi needs to meet with Don Pietro, a priest active in the Resistance, so Pina sends Marcello to bring him back to the apartment. Rossellini cuts to black, and we quickly see it is the black of Don Pietro's robe. He is in motion (almost always a virtue in *Open City*), and a moving, hand-held camera captures not only the energy and joy of the boys playing soccer (sound is important here as well: their group noise, like that of the crowd earlier at the bakery, is one of the vernacular languages of *Open City*, communal and exuberant) but also the way that the priest is both referee and participant, alternately blowing his whistle and kicking the ball, a precise image of the dual responsibilities he has to negotiate outside the ball field as well. Only after viewing the entire film do we become fully aware of how evocative this scene is, how much of what is to come is implicit here: the ball hitting Don Pietro on the head is a comic touch, but looks forward to a deeper wound, and the moment when he hands his whistle to one of the older boys to take over for him as he departs is surprisingly and almost inexplicably poignant, a preview of how the film must end.

Don Pietro and Marcello walk out through the church to the street, where the real holy actions and confessions happen in the film. (As Martin Scorsese, deeply influenced by neorealism and Rossellini in particular, will say at the beginning of *Mean Streets* [1973], "You don't make up for your sins in church. You do it in the street. You do it at home.") The camera follows them as they walk (a technique repeated later when Don Pietro walks with Pina and hears her confession), and although Don Pietro is not altogether pleased by the radical slogans

Marcello mouths, picked up from his friend Romoletto, about the need to "close ranks against the common enemy," a sudden extreme close-up (used rarely, as a kind of special effect in the film) of the boy reinforces his sincerity, and whether he knows it or not, Don Pietro is on the way to follow Marcello's good advice. He meets Manfredi, the "denounced" Communist who must stay in hiding, and agrees to pick up money for him and deliver it to help the fighters in the Resistance movement harbored nearby. There may be a bit of an in-joke here, as the million lire hidden in the books Don Pietro is to carry is exactly the budget-busting amount that Aldo Fabrizi, the actor playing him, initially demanded as his fee. Fabrizi at least gets his hands on a million lire in the film, and also gets an opportunity to show off his comic talents. While waiting in a shop to make the pickup, Don Pietro sees two statues, one of a nude woman, the other of St. Rocco, who appears to be staring at the nude. Don Pietro modestly turns the nude statue around, only to be shocked by St. Rocco now apparently staring at her backside, so St. Rocco needs to be adjusted again. This is one of several delightful comic interludes in the film, and is no less amusing even if we recognize that it was probably lifted directly out of an old music-hall routine – if not from *Behind the Screen* (1916), one of the great short films by an old music-hall master, Charlie Chaplin.

The tone changes markedly though as a wipe moves us from the literally underground meeting of the men planning Resistance activities to the brightly lit nightclub dressing room, where Marina, earlier identified as Manfredi's lover, sits in front of a mirror and nervously looks in her handbag for drugs (evidently pictured in more detail in shots censored from the American release version). Marina is joined by Lauretta, Pina's sister, and the two of them chatter about their personal needs and attraction to the "things that are bad for us, but we do them all the same." When Ingrid, the female counterpart of Bergmann, enters the room, bringing drugs, she completes a triptych that, in almost medieval fashion, depicts an ominous progression: Lauretta is a giggling, flighty young woman, satisfied to enjoy the easy life assured by sleeping with "Fritz"; Marina is a lost soul, soon to betray her man; and Ingrid is a hardened she-Nazi, a woman-seducing demon.

Later, Rossellini will insert a blunt verbal critique of this shallow and dangerous way of life when Manfredi finally confronts Marina, but here the commentary is conveyed visually, by what I describe in my essay in this volume as ethical intercutting. The scene shifts from the immoral glitter of the dressing room to the poverty of the cleric's room, with cabbage cooking on the heating stove. Agostino, the sexton who earlier in the film had overcome his momentary hesitancy and, after making the sign of the cross – which both begs forgiveness for what he is about to do and blesses the event – joined in the looting at the bakery, recalls that episode to Pina and condemns the actions of "you fanatical women" who "will yet bring tragedy,"[8] but his accusation fits the women of the immediately previous scene more than Pina. Pina is obviously the opposite of these women, visually and morally, and as she walks with Don Pietro to help him deliver the money, she confesses her sense of guilt in a way that confirms her ethical integrity. Echoing Marina, she says that she has done many things that she shouldn't have – most obviously, her wedding to Francesco is tomorrow, and she is already pregnant – but the fact that she has acted out of deep love, during a time when love is especially precious and needed, makes this "sin" relatively insignificant. Don Pietro tries to soothe her anxiety – she asks, "Doesn't Christ see us?" – by running through some doctrines about self-examination, deserved punishment, prayer, and pity, but he is most helpful when he shares with her a moment of justifiable anger. Throughout the film, Rossellini "resolves" some key dilemmas by turning from the abstract to the concrete: here the sight of the Nazis in the street harassing someone ends any confusion about what the real sins are and what is to be done.

At night, because of the curfew, the main characters gather inside the claustrophobic apartment building, and the pressures of day-to-day life erupt. The sequences in this section – which would provide models for many later American film and television dramas of tenement life, moving the "Grand Hotel" format of intertwined lives into a not-so-grand environment filled with combustible families and neighbors and dinner-table and stairwell arguments and conversations – show the perils and pains of domesticity. Family life is particularly treacherous: Pina and Lauretta have a violent argument, which

leaves Pina, on the eve of her wedding, discouraged and fearful. Mothers and fathers routinely scream, threaten, and slap, especially when their sons return home late: ironically, the very disciplined and well-organized boys have just bombed one of the Nazi's gasoline tanks and come back safely, only to be spanked and berated by their parents for worrying them.[9]

But life in even a sometimes claustrophobically tight family and community has its advantages as well. Several of the vignettes in this part of the film vividly capture the sustaining warmth of close human contact. Interestingly, these vignettes revolve around Francesco, who is not usually given as much critical attention as Manfredi, Pina, and Don Pietro, but plays a key role in the film. The scene of Francesco and Manfredi sitting at a table eating is both simple and sacramental. Francesco's brief talk with Marcello as he tucks him in bed not only confirms that they, along with Pina and the baby yet to be born, are creating a new family, but also illustrates that some fathers are not tyrannical and will respect the needs of their sons for freedom and privacy. (The virtues of family, motherhood, and fatherhood were colonized and contaminated by the Italian government under Mussolini, which used them as mechanisms of oppression and control; *Open City* redefines and renovates these as well as a variety of other roles and institutions.) And in the most touching scene in this part of the film, Francesco consoles Pina, reenacting their first meeting, reconfirming their deep love, and then tying this love to a broader force that will move not only them but the whole country from winter to a new springtime.

The dawn of the next day, though, does not bring with it this hoped-for change. Manfredi has been identified as an escaped antifascist fighter, and has been spotted in the area and linked to the previous night's bombing raid. This prompts a *rastrellamento*, all too vivid in the memory of the Italian audiences of the time, a sudden armed search of the apartment building. High-angle and long shots establish a geography of terror as we see the extent of the Nazis' show of strength against an entire population, blocking streets, closing entrances and exits to the building, and herding out all the occupants – mainly women, since the men have been able to escape through an alleyway. The inefficacy of the raid affords some relief and nearly turns the incident into a grimly comic one, with the Nazis milling

around, all dressed up but no one to shoot – unfortunately, never a lasting problem with Nazis, as we will soon see – but the tension remains, expertly choreographed by Rossellini in a complex pattern of strain and relief.

The next dramatic flare-up occurs when Marcello tells Don Pietro that Romoletto has bombs in his attic. The two of them rush to the apartment building; walk through the guards, claiming that they are going to minister to the paralyzed old man still in the building; and make their way up to Romoletto's, where they take away his bomb and submachine gun. With one catastrophe narrowly averted, they face another potential one immediately, which Rossellini portrays comically: when they attempt to hide the bomb and gun in the old man's room, Marcello accidentally knocks the bomb off the table and it is caught just in time by Don Pietro in a move worthy of Chaplin or Keaton; then the old man raises a ruckus, thinking that the priest is there to administer the last rites to him. Unable to quiet him otherwise, Don Pietro applies the sacrament of the frying pan to his head (we don't see this, but hear a resounding noise and imagine the rest), and when the Nazis come into the room, all they find is an old man peacefully unconscious, attended by a priest and his young helper.

The relief we feel is substantial, but not lasting. Outside the building, Francesco has been seized, and as he screams Pina's name, she breaks from the guards and chases after the truck carrying him away, a dramatic episode based, as Tag Gallagher notes, on a real-life argument Anna Magnani had with her lover at the time and Rossellini's recollection of a very famous scene in Vidor's *The Big Parade* (1925).[10] Suddenly, Pina is shot and falls to the ground. (Years later, Alfred Hitchcock will take credit for disrupting audience expectations in *Psycho* by the unheard-of innovation of killing off the character played by the main female star midway through the picture, but this had already been done in *Open City*.) Rossellini uses quick cuts and shifting camera positions to heighten our shock and disorientation – the film *Celluloide*, discussed later in this volume in Millicent Marcus' essay, recreates in detail Rossellini's careful adjustments to the editing and timing of this sequence to make it as powerful as could be, a classic example of artistry serving "realism" – and in one of those moments that seems both instantaneous and never-ending, we

witness the death of Pina, Marcello's almost unbearable grief, and Don Pietro's last act of comfort for Pina, cradling her in a pietà-like embrace (see Fig. 10). The murder of Pina is more compressed but has much in common with the Odessa Steps sequence in Eisenstein's *Potemkin*: in exemplifying tyranny (Rossellini might well have used an intertitle with the word "Nazis" on it, just as Eisenstein used one with the word "Cossacks"); in placing the murder of innocence at the center of a work of revolutionary struggle; and in mobilizing the resources of montage to create an unforgettable drama, surely one of the most memorable moments in all of film history. This sequence is followed immediately by a partisan attack on the trucks, freeing the prisoners, and some critics feel that this reinforces the irony, even the uselessness, of Pina's protest that led to her death. But it may well be that Rossellini had in mind the deeper structure and logic of the Odessa Steps sequence, which concludes with a shot of a gun going off, destroying a czarist building presumably in retaliation for the massacre. Similarly, Rossellini's sequence invokes not pathetic victimization but determination, resolve, and counterattack.

Comic episodes frame the death of Pina, but the difference in tone is striking. The light slapstick of Don Pietro and the frying pan gives way to the dark humor at the restaurant where Francesco, Manfredi, and Marina meet. German soldiers bring in several sheep, which they prepare to shoot and eat, prompting the restaurateur to comment that the Nazis are indeed good butchers. The "joke" is predictable, but compelling, as Rossellini joins a long line of savage ironists who take metaphors literally. This list includes Eisenstein, and Rossellini may well be giving his version of a key section of *Strike*, where shots of workers being killed by soldiers are intercut with graphic shots of an animal killed in a slaughterhouse. Rossellini does not use quick cuts, but he creates much of the emotional effect and intellectual insight of montage even when the images he connects – in this case, the death of Pina and the butchering of the sheep (the latter, I should add, not shown directly in the film) – are dispersed rather than successive or simultaneous.

At the dinner meeting, Marina arranges to hide Francesco and Manfredi in her apartment, but when they arrive, we instantly recognize how out of place they are. The American jazz music blaring from her radio (which seems particularly offensive as it is contrasted with the

sound of a church organ in a brief scene immediately before it), the gin that Marina offers, clearly a gift from the Nazis, and the bright-lit but artificial cheeriness of the atmosphere do not suit the seriousness of Francesco and Manfredi, deep in mourning for the death of Pina even as Marina and a tipsy Lauretta seem oblivious to it. When Manfredi finds drugs in Marina's bag, he initiates a confrontation that escalates quickly. Marina defends her choice to do what she has to do to get through these hard times, which she defines in terms of poverty, hunger, and hard work, even if that means prostituting herself. Manfredi counters by talking about the only thing that makes life bearable, love – "love for one's husband, children, friends" – but Marina hears this only as "preaching," especially when he adds "that which you call love is sordid by comparison." In the context of this film, focused more on mobilizing and sustaining the Resistance efforts than anatomizing a relationship or fathoming the depths of a confused woman, Manfredi is ultimately more credible and sympathetic than Marina, but in his severity and indelicate handling of his lover, and in the real pathos of Marina's desperation and plea that his love "should have changed" her, we get a brief glimpse of some of the complexities that will characterize Rossellini's later films (such as *Stromboli* [1949] and *Voyage in Italy* [1953]) that do focus on personal relationships and typically follow a woman more like Marina than Pina.

Increasingly in the remainder of the film, Rossellini uses careful composition in depth to let the position of characters in the film frame convey their emotional state and relationship with other characters. Marina stands silently in the far background as Manfredi and Francesco talk about the work yet to be done in a continuing struggle that she has excluded herself from, and after Manfredi doesn't even turn to face her as she moves closer to say good night, she walks out and closes the door. Doors become especially charged with significance at the end of *Open City*, as real props and symbolic "thresholds," here a threshold of betrayal, as Marina, out of a mixture of anger, weakness, and hope for reward, calls Ingrid and informs her where Manfredi can be picked up the next day.

Not only doors but cigarettes as well proliferate at the end of the film: as part of the accumulation of detail that one would expect in a realistic film; as part of the cinematic fascination with smoke

that characterizes the genres that *Open City* associates itself with, especially war, mystery, and suspense films; and as part of a carefully elaborated pattern establishing cigarette smoking as a kind of index of character.[11] Marina's nervousness, Ingrid's vampish sophistication, and Bergmann's mannered and ruthless authoritarianism (the latter quality visible particularly when he lights a cigarette from a fancy candleholder in a gesture that echoes the way one of Manfredi's torturers casually lights his cigarette from a blowtorch) are all revealed in the way they smoke. Don Pietro smokes too, as we see in the scene where he is at his desk assembling the forged identification papers for Manfredi, but the significance is very positive. Some years later, in a film deeply influenced by Italian neorealism, the priest in Elia Kazan's *On the Waterfront* (1954) confirms that he is beginning to step farther from the church and into the crucible of the real world by lighting up a cigarette. Similarly, a cigarette is yet another sign that Don Pietro's true holiness is this-worldly.

Don Pietro has done his best to protect Manfredi and also a runaway Austrian soldier who has been hiding with him, but as they leave the church, all three are arrested by the Nazis, shown by Rossellini from a distance perhaps to increase the documentary look of the sequence. Francesco escapes capture only because he had paused for a moment to say goodbye to Marcello, who gave him a parting gift of one of Pina's scarves. This is the last we hear of Pina and Francesco in the film, which now bears down heavily on the fate of Manfredi and Don Pietro.

The last part of *Open City* contains many realistic details and directly alludes to familiar characters and events of recent days that the original audience would recognize, but it is also perhaps the most stylized and symbolic part of the film. One of the more subtle bits of symbolism comes as Marina gets her reward for informing on Manfredi: Ingrid gives her not only drugs but a fur coat. The fur coat calls to mind vanity and corrupt luxury, of course, conveyed most vividly as Ingrid and Marina, arm in arm, stare at their image in a mirror (see Fig. 11), but is also associated with an alien and oppressive culture: of the North rather than the South, of restrictive rather than loose clothing, and of obsession with hate and death rather than acceptance of love and life. Rossellini elaborates on this more fully in some of his later films, especially *Voyage in Italy*, which revolves around the clash between cultures and mentalities defined by tightly

stitched clothes versus more relaxed and "open" togas. But even in *Open City*, we quickly recognize – and perhaps Marina does too – the far-reaching significance and devastating consequences of wrapping herself up in fur: she has betrayed herself, her lover, and her country. Not much later in the film, her tearful question "What have I done?" is answered when she sees the tortured body of Manfredi, and when she faints, Ingrid takes the coat off her "for the next time," presumably as a gift for another lost soul. (Perhaps this "next time" comes in the third episode in Rossellini's next film, *Paisan*, where Maria Michi, who played Marina, portrays another woman "fallen" into prostitution, also clad in a fur coat.)

The concluding part of the film is both powerfully realistic and allegorical. The three captured men are led down a long, narrow hallway to an unlit cell, and the scene is set for interrogation and torture but also a test of faith, a dark night of the soul, a metaphysical wager, and a battle of good versus evil. Bergmann needs specific information from Manfredi about the Resistance movement, but he himself admits that what is at stake in this confrontation is the foundational claim of the Nazis to be the "master race," which will be shaken if they fail to work their will upon the prisoners. The Austrian deserter, a man of much nervousness and little faith, cannot take the pressure and kills himself, but Don Pietro and Manfredi, despite Bergmann's shrewd attempts to exploit what he envisions as the fundamental antagonism of Communism and Catholicism, are sustained by faiths and practices that are ultimately more similar than different.

Bergmann is a devilish inquisitor, plying Manfredi and then Don Pietro with clever arguments that, ironically, have some credibility, especially now that we know that, just as Bergmann predicts, the coalition between Communists and Catholics was indeed fragile and short-lived in postwar Italy. But neither will denounce nor abandon the other, and while Don Pietro affirms the kinship of all that fight for justice and liberty, watchwords of radical (although not exclusively Communist) partisans, Manfredi heroically accepts his Christ-like fate, and becomes, in his own way, what Don Pietro listed him as in the makeshift identification papers, Giovanni Episcopo (Bishop John), a dealer in sacramental oil and wine.

The more Manfredi is tortured, the more the Germans seem to crack and disintegrate. Bergmann attempts to refresh himself by walking into the adjoining room, where other officers (as well as Ingrid and

Marina) sit at the piano and among art objects, drink, and play cards, but the piano sounds off-key (the music produced by a group of murderers, not surprisingly, conveys their false bravado and pretentiousness), the suit of armor on display ironically captures their immobility and deadness, the card game suggests that they are involved in an ominous existential ritual – "Who's winning?" "Oh, always the same one." – and the drinking produces only bitter self-analysis and self-contempt. In stunning contrast to the earlier stirring speeches by Francesco, Manfredi, and Don Pietro about love, hope, and the future, the drunken officer Hartmann confesses that the essence of Nazism is death, which creates a hatred that will wipe them out.

Bergmann protests against this defeatism, but he too is becoming increasingly strident and hysterical, and when he confronts Manfredi for the final time, he faces a man in the process of being transformed into a heroic martyr and Christ-like figure (see Fig. 5), one visibly scarred by what is portrayed as a modern crucifixion but also capable of doing what Christ did not do: spit back in the face of his accusers. Long shots – including one taken out of American release prints that shows his chest still burning from the application of the blowtorch[12] – reveal some of the details of the torture, and several close-ups of Manfredi's face function as shock cuts, underscored by his screams. Despite these screams, Manfredi triumphs in his silence: "You didn't talk!" Don Pietro says, as if witnessing a miracle – a miracle that brings with it a judgment that makes the Nazis take a step back in fear. A New Testament event brings out, at least momentarily, the Old Testament wrath of Don Pietro, and he repeatedly damns the Nazis and predicts that "You will be crushed . . . in the dust . . . like worms." Rossellini underscores this visually by a shadow on the wall in several key shots: it may be cast by one of the torture devices, but as Don Pietro speaks, it appears to be the scales of justice, weighing heavily against the Nazis (see Fig. 19).

After the intense drama and heavy stylization of Manfredi's torture and death, the execution of Don Pietro on the next day seems almost anticlimactic, but purposefully so. After relying on allusions to long-standing Christian iconography to place the sacrifice of Manfredi in a larger, even cosmic context, and to create a second cathartic experience paralleling the death of Pina that ends the first half of the film, Rossellini reimmerses us in the concrete historical present by

re-creating some of the details of the killing of Don Morosino, one of the real-life models for Don Pietro. The emphasis is not on the horror or tragedy of a priest's unjust death but on the concrete ways it can help those who witness it – the dual audience of the group of boys in the film and the spectators of the film – learn the most important lesson of all: as Don Pietro puts it, not to die well but to live well. These are the only important words spoken in the concluding sequence, but sound is nevertheless extremely important here. As Don Pietro walks to the chair on which he will be shot, Rossellini inserts a barely audible pulsing rhythm in the background that adds a mysterious subliminal texture to the scene. Don Pietro himself adds another undertone as he continuously prays in Latin. Romoletto, Marcello, and the other boys who have gathered to watch the execution contribute an even more hopeful tone by whistling their signature theme, confirming their close connection to the priest, one that will live on even after his death. Their whistling is stopped by the shots of the firing squad, but there is a momentary reprieve as Don Pietro realizes that he has survived: the Italian soldiers have purposely missed their target. Hartmann steps in, and the loud noise of his pistol announces the death of Don Pietro, but also cues the dramatic music that continues to the end, reinforcing the hope for the future that is Don Pietro's legacy.

The last shots of the film are "open" (that is, unresolved) and sobering, but not indeterminate and discouraging, and if the "triumphalism" of the ending is – as Michael Rogin insists in his essay in this volume – muted, it is still palpable, especially if we recognize that the final sequence of the film is Rossellini's answer to the March on Rome of 1922 that initiated and symbolized the Fascist takeover. More than twenty years later, the boys' march – despite the fact that they are only boys, that they are a small group, that they have just witnessed a demonstration of the lingering strength and brutality of fascism, and that their march is, after all, only a cinematic image rather than an accomplished reality – powerfully conveys that Rome can be, perhaps is about to be, retaken (see Fig. 12). This hopefulness is further reinforced as we become aware that the ending is not an isolated image or allusion but the culmination of a persistent effort, woven into the texture and deep structure of the film, to reclaim what the Fascists had seized and held for so long.

Open City contests fascism not only by portraying and glorifying the Resistance but by opposing and overcoming the Fascist control over myths, symbols, institutions, and values as well as physical space and bodies. Rossellini answers what R. B. Bosworth calls "the Fascist claim to ownership of the 'myth of Rome'" and what Marcus calls "Fascist mythomania" by constructing, at least cinematically, a countermyth.[13] Nearly every key element of the film can be read as a rebuttal of Fascism and plays a role in *Open City*'s relentless reappropriation of what had been lost, enacted in part, as Marcia Landy notes in her essay in this volume, by adopting but transforming clichés and conventions, signs and motifs. We see this in small details as well as large patterns in the film. For example, even the title was reclaimed from the Fascists: "Rome Open City" was printed on signs carried and armbands worn by Nazi soldiers as they patrolled the occupied city, but was converted to a much different meaning by Rossellini.[14] Mussolini's symbolic attempt to lay claim to the present and future of Italy by naming one of his sons Romano is trumped by naming the young Resistance leader in the film Romoletto, held up as a true heir of the Roman spirit despite the fact that he is physically disabled and thus obviously not one of the Fascist-approved models of a hard, athletic body. And the "springtime" promised by Francesco is not only an archetypal image of rebirth and recovery but also the keynote of a new hymn that replaces the "primavera di bellezza" of the Fascist anthem, *Giovinezza*.[15]

Much that was colonized and perverted by the Fascists is liberated in *Open City*, successfully challenging their proprietorship over conceptions of motherhood and the family, structures of organized public life and leisure activity, language, and the idea of the people. *Open City* does not disavow domesticity – it would be a victory for fascism if their abuses forever contaminated notions of motherhood, fatherhood, the family, and the home – but reconfigures it, dramatizing, for example, that motherhood, instead of relegating women to Fascist baby making, can be a vital part of the radical regeneration of the world, and that the home, instead of being a source and extension of oppressive control, can be a microcosm of a society based on justice, freedom, and mutual support. The film counters the Fascist regimentation of social life by establishing the Resistance as the truest form of *Dopolavoro*, organized after-work activity – in fact, the real

work of life. Rejecting the Fascist emphasis on "purity" of language and obedience even on a linguistic level to a centralized model and authority, Rossellini loads the film with multivocality, a rich variety of dialects and personal inflections, and the ideal of free speech. Finally, as Anna Maria Torriglia points out, the film self-consciously redefines the "national popular project," replacing the much-vaunted Fascist notion of the *popolo italiano*, revolving around mysteries of blood, violence, obedience, and nationalistic destiny, with a more expansive and politically radical vision of *popolo*, typified especially by Pina, the lower-class heroine, "as the source of regeneration for Italian democracy."[16]

Perhaps not the least of the reappropriations in *Open City* is the reclamation of neorealism itself, part of a broader movement to retake and redirect cinema in general. Without denying that, as Ruth Ben-Ghiat convincingly argues, neorealism has deep and often unacknowledged roots in the Fascist period, in what she calls a "Mussolinian matrix," *Open City* is an integral and self-conscious part of uprooting cinema from that matrix.[17] Neorealism was not initiated in the 1940s – Ben-Ghiat traces in detail the "canonization of neorealism as a Fascist style" through the 1920s and 1930s[18] – but it was substantially reinvented and reclaimed by Rossellini, Visconti, De Sica, and others. Applying martial metaphors in this context is disturbing but proper: in many ways, *Open City* is a powerful example of "war by other means." Cinema, like war, aspires to control space, consciousness, representation, and behavior, and *Open City* effectively takes back territory and signifiers and hearts and minds. Marcus' high praise for *Paisan* fits *Open City* equally well, and wonderfully describes its central strategy and enduring effect: in its "disruption of Nazi spectacle and its reappropriation for the cause of the Resistance," it "suggests the way in which cinema can intervene to redirect the flow of postwar Italian history."[19] And if the war metaphor is too disturbing, especially for a film that is profoundly antiwar, let me end by adding aesthetic, ethical, and even theological coloration: in the many ways described above and in the essays that follow, *Open City*, as an artwork and an intervention, a representation of and step into history, accomplishes what Siegfried Kracauer describes as realist cinema's highest goal: a redemption of physical reality – and along the way, a redemption of cinema.[20]

THE ESSAYS

The contributions to this volume – including the brief selection of strikingly prescient early reviews of the film reprinted following the essays – place *Open City* in a variety of interpretive contexts that help us understand the film's forebears, construction, and impact, that is to say, its artistic and historical past, present, and future. Neorealism, the cinematic movement that Rossellini is associated with and often, somewhat simplistically, credited with initiating and steering, is one of the most important of these contexts. Because it is an inevitable (and necessary) reference point in discussions of *Open City*, in the first essay of the collection I sketch out some of the conventional appraisals offered by practitioners as well as historians and critical theorists of the origins, practices, and intentions of neorealism, then use examples from Rossellini's writings and *Open City* to illustrate his contribution to, but also complex relationship with, such a protean conception of cinema. Without denying the relevance to Rossellini of the various manifesto-like pronouncements that attempt to give shape to this phenomenon, I take note especially of his modifications, transformations, and significant refusals of what are often taken to be the essential conventions and components of neorealism. I was tempted to title this essay "Rossellini vs. Neorealism" in keeping with his own claim in the title of one of his essays that "I Am Not the Father of Neorealism," but that might have conveyed a sense of fundamental antagonism that would overstate the case. My argument in the more neutrally titled "Rossellini, *Open City*, and Neorealism" is, I hope, somewhat more properly balanced: that Rossellini exemplifies but also contests and expands conventional definitions of neorealism, and that we must "look both to and beyond the usual denotations and connotations of neorealism to appreciate the full range of *Open City*'s artistry and achievement."

My general discussion of Rossellini, *Open City*, and neorealism is amplified by Peter Bondanella's more precisely focused, historicized, and "revisionary" consideration of those subjects. Without discounting the significance of *Open City* as a "breakthrough" film, Bondanella argues that we need to qualify the common emphasis on both the "neo" and the "realistic" aspects of the film in order to accurately recognize its many accomplishments and its proper place in film

history. In "The Making of *Roma città aperta*: The Legacy of Fascism and the Birth of Neorealism," Bondanella suggests that interpretations of Italian neorealism in general and *Open City* in particular have been somewhat skewed by "ideological, political, and personal interests" that downplay the pivotal and lingering influence of the cinema of the Fascist period. His repeated emphasis is on how key aspects of the films, filmmaking practices, and theories of this period were not so much jettisoned as shrewdly adopted and redirected by the neorealists of the next decade. Neorealism did not generate itself nor emerge fully grown: Bondanella points out that "the search for realism in the cinema in Italy began not in 1945 but in the 1930s," and the fascist Leo Longanesi gives as precise a definition of the aims of neorealism as Cesare Zavattini did almost two decades later. Furthermore, a variety of films provided important models of such things as location shooting, "fictional documentary," *coralità*, and politicized romances, which would later be taken as signature elements of neorealism. One of the important bridges between Fascist-era cinema and neorealism is Rossellini's early work, and Bondanella demonstrates that by examining the later "war trilogy" (*Open City*, *Paisan*, and *Germany Year Zero*) in the light of his earlier, perhaps misnamed "fascist trilogy" (*The White Ship*, *A Pilot Returns*, and *The Man of the Cross*), we get a good view of how Rossellini adopted and consolidated some elements of his first films even as he was modifying and leaving behind others.

For Bondanella, not only the history but the method and intentions of neorealism are often misrepresented, and he looks closely at some of the production circumstances of *Open City* to illustrate that it was "created outside the rigid boundaries of a programmatic search for a particular kind of realism." There is news-style reportage in the film, but also contrived and stylized melodrama and comedy, and the final film is less a product of true-to-life and disorderly improvisation than of detailed scriptwork, involving serendipity but also "carefully balanced contributions" shrewdly orchestrated by Rossellini. Bondanella's essay is deeply iconoclastic, but he wants to demolish not neorealism but certain myths of neorealism. As he shakes up an overly simplified and "programmatic" definition of neorealism and deflates the claims that *Open City* marks a radical break with the past,

he convincingly underscores the film's "hybrid" nature and remarkable achievement as "an ingenious blending of the old and the new."

In "*Celluloide* and the Palimpsest of Cinematic Memory: Carlo Lizzani's Film of the Story Behind *Open City*," Millicent Marcus shares a dual focus with Bondanella: on the role of *Open City* in film history and the complicated process of the making of the film. She is primarily concerned with the history that comes after the film, tracing the legacy of *Open City* in films that followed it and in the public consciousness of postwar Italy to this day. And in her examination of the construction of the film, the behind-the-scenes and off-screen dramas are as critical as the on-screen ones, and she envisions Rossellini as a cunning craftsman to a large extent because, to borrow a phrase from Orson Welles, he is able to preside over chaos.

Marcus first discusses numerous "cinematic appropriations of Rossellini's film" from its release to the 1990s. This survey reinforces the continuing central role of *Open City* in postwar Italian cinema, but also reveals how allusions to it tend to register how far Italian cinema and the Italian nation have fallen from the achievement of *Open City* and the hope for a bright future embodied in the film. Films as different as *Bellissimo*, *Mamma Roma*, *Last Tango in Paris*, *Icicle Thief*, and even Rossellini's own *Paisan* use *Open City* as a touchstone to analyze how much has been lost, and how the promised new cinema and new society after the fall of Fascism have not materialized.

Celluloide, directed by Carlo Lizzani, a neorealist of long standing, is Marcus' choice as "the latest and most complete example of cinematic appropriations of Rossellini's film," and it provides a stunning illustration of how *Open City*, no longer merely a film text but also a watershed historical moment and an ever-expanding composite of responses, re-creations, memories, and stories, has taken the form of a palimpsest, made up of layer upon layer, each of which contributes to a larger whole and a potentially dizzying and decentered structure. *Celluloide* is no more a straightforward documentary about the making of *Open City* than *Open City* is a documentary about certain events in Rome in 1945. If we examine this one layer of Lizzani's film, we get a fascinating portrayal of some of the events (at least as envisioned by Lizzani, and recollected by Ugo Pirro, whose book was a crucial source for the film) behind the writing and shooting of *Open City*, the search for funding, the eruption of real events into the film,

and so on. This is a particularly valuable layer of *Celluloide*, but it is not the final word on the story of the making of *Open City*, and, as Marcus points out, it is constantly interrupted: by shots that remind us that we are watching a film about actors playing actors playing actors, clips from the original film, jarring shifts from color to black and white, newsreel footage, and leaps back and forth in time. Marcus, though, is careful to note that this palimpsest structure does not turn *Celluloide* into a relentlessly deconstructed and indeterminate text: on the contrary, because of its authenticity and cinematic inventiveness, it is an invaluable commentary on *Open City*, a tribute to a film that was "a foundational historical event," and a strikingly successful attempt to reinvigorate modern filmmaking, currently mired in postmodern "anemia," by not only recalling but embodying in its own way the tradition of a vital cinema exemplified by Rossellini's film.

Marcia Landy further traces some of the specific contours of this vitality in her essay, "Diverting Clichés: Femininity, Masculinity, Melodrama, and Neorealism in *Open City*," in which she uses Rossellini's film as a "test case for rethinking the premises of neorealism." One of her persistent efforts is to counter the arguments of critics who claim that because of its continuity with cinematic conventions of the Fascist period, *Open City*, far from being the "radical" work it is often proclaimed as, betrays a fundamental conservatism, even a "complicity with the Fascist era." Landy acknowledges that the film constantly invokes clichés – readily recognizable conventions of style, genre, character, theme, and image – but in a deeply provocative and unsettling way. Following André Bazin and Gilles Deleuze, she notes that the much-vaunted realism of the neorealists disrupts familiar patterns of cinematic representation and response, often creating a sense of strangeness. The spectator becomes unmoored as the predictable codes and patterns that typically stabilize conventional cinema are both adopted and contested. Rossellini's dynamic "shattering of cliché by means of cliché" in *Open City* can be disorienting but also liberating, helping to create a kind of perception not foreshortened or clouded by the ideology that created the constricting clichés in the first place.

Melodrama is a key reference point for Landy, particularly because it raises issues of gender not often addressed in critical discussions of

Open City. The melodramatic elements of the film have long been recognized, but Landy emphasizes its particular affinity with late Fascist-era films that used melodrama to convey an "oblique" critique of society and portray a "moribund society" in need of change. She also argues in general that Rossellini uses melodrama to "complicate and undermine melodramatic formulas." This is particularly evident in the film's representation of femininity and masculinity. Pina, for example, in many ways seems to be a traditional figure of the victimized woman standing for the suffering of a nation, but Landy analyzes how Rossellini and Anna Magnani turn her into "the embodiment of a new type of femininity," quite a departure from the conservative image of "maternal femininity." Other women in the film as well are more than formulaic characters: Lauretta, basically a simple fool, nevertheless rises to a key moment of insight when she ruefully acknowledges that Manfredi is correct in criticizing her shallowness; and Marina is a carefully constructed diminished image of a diva, "a parody of female roles during Fascism." Rossellini "wrestles" with images of masculinity as well, modifying and subverting conventional figures of the hero in his presentation of the priest concerned far more with this world than the next and the Resistance fighter constrained for most of the film to inactivity.

Beyond the many modifications and subversions of character and plot conventions, in some ways the most important cliché that *Open City* shatters is the conventional way we look at the world and a film. Rossellini dramatizes varieties of the gaze within the film, contrasting Bergmann's oppressive surveillance and Marina's narcissistic attraction to her own image in the mirror to Don Pietro's brave and compassionate direct look at the tortured body of Manfredi, passed on to the boys at the end who witness the priest's death. *Open City* cleanses our doors of perception as well: by "invoking and then blocking or jamming clichéd responses, uprooting their usual associations, and defusing emotional identification," Rossellini creates "a cinema of thought, one that challenges automatic responses to the cinematic world."

As David Forgacs demonstrates in "Space, Rhetoric, and the Divided City in *Roma città aperta*," Rossellini's "cinema of thought" unfolds most fully when we are alert to the many layers of signification embedded in the visual design of *Open City*. Forgacs begins his

essay by examining the resonance of the term "open city," setting the film in its historical context and showing how the term had a variety of reference points: attempts by the defeated and dispirited Italian government to make peace with the Allies, German violations and self-serving uses of the agreement to keep the "sacred city" of Rome protected, and efforts by the Resistance to make Rome a truly open city, ending oppressive control and instituting reconstructive social programs. The "open city" was in fact a divided city, and Forgacs traces out in detail how the film records these various divisions.

All the spaces in *Open City* are charged with meaning: sometimes because they show real places where key events of the period took place (like the execution of the real priest who was the model for Don Pietro), and other times because they have powerful symbolic associations (like the dome of St. Peter's, shown at the beginning and the end of the film) and help Rossellini give concrete form to the moral polarities that are key themes, especially the contrast between the "good Italians," whose domestic spaces convey positive communal values, and the "evil Nazis," who inhabit places of torture and corruption. Movement in space is one of the "languages" in the film, sometimes working in concert with other uses of language – like antifascist graffiti on the walls and "insubordinate humor" directed against the occupiers – to convey the struggle for control of "the lived space of the community": for example, the horizontal zigzagging and street- and below-street-level activities of Don Pietro and the partisans assert the existence of a kind of city within a city beyond the control of the Nazis, often ineffectively exerted from above.

In "reading" the spaces of *Open City*, Forgacs reveals often-overlooked layers of meaning and also underscores how the film is both a documentary record and a carefully articulated "rhetorical construction," with all its elements (including its "realism") intricately arranged to serve "an identifiable purpose of persuasion." Neorealism in general is often praised for its honest, all-inclusive approach to reality, but Forgacs shrewdly highlights the extent to which *Open City* works by exclusion as well as inclusion. In avoiding classical monuments and "symbols of Fascist power," Rossellini "in effect reappropriates Rome for its ordinary citizens and erases the traces of the Fascist regime." In part because of its selectivity and rhetoric, then, *Open City* is ultimately a passionate and artful film, and while this

qualifies its relationship to common conceptions of neorealism, these qualities are at the root of much of its lasting power and appeal.

Michael Rogin's essay, "Mourning, Melancholia, and the Popular Front: Roberto Rossellini's Beautiful Revolution," effectively concludes the main part of the volume, not because it wraps everything up into a neat package but because it ambitiously addresses several of the most important and frequently debated aspects of *Open City*. First, Rogin attempts to identify the film's political positions and how they "translate into film form." Then, in the process of examining "the historical and psychological sources of [the film's] achievement," he tries to account for its complex tone, particularly at the end. Along the way, he surveys the initial critical reception of the film, both in the United States and in Italy, contrasts it with another contemporary Resistance film, *Days of Glory*, whose triumphant ending is much less problematic than Rossellini's, situates it in the key political debates of the postwar period, and discusses it in the context of Rossellini's later films and often troubled personal life and public image.

For Rogin, *Open City* is fraught with tension. It is in many ways the quintessential Popular Front film, aimed at mobilizing a broad-based unified opposition to the true enemy at hand, but is at the same time highly conscious of the difficulties of sustaining such a coalition, the limits of moderate reform, and the likelihood of the collapse of a union of unlikely bedfellows. It is a deeply antifascist film, but even though, as many critics have noticed, it seems to envision fascism as an aberration and an alien force imposed on otherwise good Italians, it cannot entirely banish a feeling of guilty complicity. The Italian faces of fascism, and indeed Rossellini's own not entirely innocent connections with Fascist authorities in the film industry, do not figure directly in *Open City*, but Rogin suggests that they lie behind the film's unremittingly "sober *mise-en-scène*" and inability to envision a thoroughly "beautiful revolution."

Rogin borrows this last phrase from Marx, but his analysis is more deeply indebted to two other theorists: Antonio Gramsci and Freud. He allies *Open City* to Gramsci's "project for creating a national popular culture," a cornerstone of his plan for progressive political change, but notes that Rossellini turns Gramsci upside down, in part by focusing on short-term objectives doomed to fail rather than long-term strategies of unification and consolidation, and as a result, the film

"makes visual poetry from defeat" and provides a better picture of suffering than of release from suffering. Freud adds a psychological dimension to this political analysis and helps Rogin describe the way that Rossellini structures *Open City* as reparation for repression, a process that makes the film brave and honest, but also depressive, drenched in "love and mourning," and ending with "neutral sadness."

Its achievement, though, he points out, is by no means inconsequential. *Open City*, however tremulous, is a peak moment in Rossellini's career: his later films move from mourning to a much more deeply disturbing melancholia and "involution from popular solidarity," and his public image changed from savior of cinema to Cold War villain. Rogin joins with all the other contributors to the volume in affirming that, particularly because of its hard-earned, carefully wrought, and sustained presentation of "the intensity of a suffering-enhanced love of life," *Open City* is a pivotal, unforgettable, and rippling moment in not only the history of film but also the history of our rational, emotional, and spiritual reckoning with modern times.

NOTES

1. Roberto Rossellini, "Who Were You?," interview with Dacia Maraini (1973), reprinted in Rossellini, *My Method: Writings & Interviews*, ed. Adriano Aprà, trans. Annapaola Cancogni (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1992), p. 1.
2. Rossellini, "Who Were You?," p. 2.
3. Rossellini, "Before *Open City*," interview with Francesco Savo (1974), reprinted in *My Method*, p. 11.
4. The first phrase is quoted in Tag Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini: His Life and Films* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), p. 28; the second is from Rossellini, "Who Were You?," p. 8.
5. See Peter Bondanella, *The Films of Roberto Rossellini* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 25–31.
6. Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 46.
7. Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, p. 722, n. 145.
8. Normally, throughout my essay I quote dialogue from *The War Trilogy: Open City, Paisan, Germany Year Zero*, ed. Stefano Roncoroni, trans. Judith Green (New York: Grossman, 1973), but here I quote from the subtitle in the film, which is much more melodramatic than the translation in the published screenplay, a transcription and translation of dialogue taken from watching

various versions of the film. The many differences between the subtitles and the published screenplay are worth studying. Reading the screenplay also alerts one to how much of the dialogue of the film is not captured or is rendered somewhat inaccurately in the subtitles.

9. Another more subtle irony is that the shot showing the triumphal march of the boys from the explosion features the same kind of dramatic "Nuremberg" lighting characteristically used in documentaries by Leni Riefenstahl and others "spectacularizing" Nazi "achievements."
10. Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 154–57.
11. Robert Burgoyne comments briefly on the cigarette motif in *Open City*, in "The Imaginary and the Neo-Real," *Enclitic* 3, no. 1 (1979): 30–31.
12. This censored shot is shown in Martin Scorsese's film, *My Voyage in Italy* (Mediatrade, in conjunction with Paso Doble Film, 1999).
13. R. B. Bosworth, *The Italian Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives in the Interpretation of Mussolini and Fascism* (London: Arnold, 1998), p. 38; Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, pp. 47–49.
14. Jane Scrivener, *Inside Rome with the Germans* (New York: Macmillan, 1945), p. 18.
15. Quoted in Bosworth, *The Italian Dictatorship*, p. 163, n. 40.
16. Anna Maria Torriglia, *Broken Time, Fragmented Space: A Cultural Map for Postwar Italy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002), p. 183, n. 76.
17. Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "Neorealism in Italy, 1930–50: From Fascism to Resistance," *Romance Languages Annual* 3 (1991): 159.
18. Ben-Ghiat, "Neorealism in Italy, 1930–50," p. 157.
19. Millicent Marcus, *After Fellini: National Cinema in the Postmodern Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 38. For a strikingly negative view of what I praise as Rossellini's creative and progressive reappropriations, see Vincent F. Rocchio's chapter on *Open City* in *Cinema of Anxiety: A Psychoanalysis of Italian Neorealism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), pp. 29–51, in which he argues that the film "attempt[s] to recontain a subversive utopian threat" by "co-opting the hegemony of the former Fascist consensus" (p. 50). For Rocchio, *Open City* does not so much resist as reinstate a culture based on individual renunciation, which is the shared "logic" of fascism and patriarchal capitalism. His analysis is a useful caution to anyone who would overstate the radicalism of *Open City*, but I find that his stress on the film's antifascism as ultimately a strategy of anxiety management and false consciousness that helped pave the way for the reactionary postwar period elides too much of the film's complex intention, achievement, and impact.
20. See Siegfried Kracauer, *Theory of Film: The Redemption of Physical Reality* (1960; reprinted New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).

SIDNEY GOTTLIEB

1 Rossellini, *Open City*, and Neorealism

Neorealism has been a source of inspiration and often heated debate, particularly in Italy but worldwide as well, for several generations of filmmakers, critics, theorists, and even politicians. It is one of the key interpretive contexts for *Open City* – and vice versa: the film made significant contributions to the articulation of neorealism and gives us important insight into Rossellini's particular involvement in this heterogenous and collaborative movement – or school, or genre, or cohort, or attitude, as it is variously described. At the same time, *Open City* is typically viewed in the light of definitions of neorealism that fit the film only imperfectly, and foreground some aspects of it at the expense of excluding other equally important ones. The connection between *Open City* and neorealism is thus both inevitable and problematic, enlightening and potentially darkening. In order to understand some of the complexities of this connection, it may be helpful to briefly summarize key aspects of neorealism, as it is usually and in some respects as it is not usually defined, consider a few specific comments by Rossellini that help clarify his take on neorealism, and briefly examine why we should look both to and beyond the usual denotations and connotations of neorealism to appreciate the full range of *Open City*'s artistry and achievement.

Although it would in some ways be truer to the spirit of neorealism to describe it in a decentered cascade of phrases, keywords, and concepts that have been generated through the years by its various practitioners, theorists, and witnesses, for the sake of clarity, it may

be useful to organize a definition around several categories. First, the time, place, historical context, and cast of characters. Even though the term was initially used to describe a certain kind of anti-lyrical Italian literature of the 1930s, then applied to the French cinema of poetic realism of the same period,[1] neorealism has become associated with Italian filmmaking from the early 1940s to the early 1950s, specifically the films of Rossellini, Luchino Visconti, Vittorio De Sica, and Giuseppe De Santis, among others, working with writers including Cesare Zavattini and Federico Fellini, and championed (and occasionally taken to task) by critics and theorists including Umberto Barbaro, Guido Aristarco, and, most influentially, André Bazin in France. The Italian experience of war and the almost equally traumatic postwar "recovery" indelibly marked neorealism, and the films are set in an immediately recognizable historical "present" showing the bulk of the population suffering under the ravages of fascism (extending beyond the wartime period) and also suffering various forms of material and spiritual poverty and oppression that could not be blamed completely on the Black Shirts and the Nazis. Neorealism is rightly defined as a cinema of the Resistance, but it is a cinema of resistance interpreted broadly, linked not only specifically to the antifascist partisan movement – their practical struggle as well as their utopian dreams – but to a continuing critique of the conditions, institutions, and individual predilections that cause violence, poverty, isolation, and spiritual distress.

While the sociohistorical context is usually given priority, we should also be aware of the aesthetic context for neorealism, much of which turns out to be literary. In her invaluable introductory chapter to *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, Millicent Marcus shows the extent to which the Italian revolution in cinema had its roots in the long tradition of literary revolutions that announced themselves under the banner of "realism."[2] In particular, the *verismo* of Giovanni Verga in the late nineteenth century helped give the Italian filmmakers a model of how to take art away from the salons (and studios), give it the seriousness and truth-value of philosophy and science, and – taking a full step beyond Verga – assert the importance of the artist as not only a reflector of or commentator on but participant in and shaper of history. Contemporary American literature also had a decisive influence on the development of neorealism, and the

experiments in form (often mixing avant-garde and documentary elements), neutral and unsentimental tone, lower-class characters, landscape of violence, crime, and corruption, cynical attitude toward conventional pieties of morals and manners, and reliance on often unembellished vernacular language and direct dialogue in the works of writers like Hemingway, Faulkner, Dos Passos, and James M. Cain all find a place in the films of Visconti, Rossellini, and many of the other Italian neorealists.

The cinematic aspects of the aesthetic context of neorealism are typically downplayed or overlooked, perhaps largely because the neorealists insisted that their primary reference point was reality, not other films. They also repeatedly emphasized their rejection of previous cinematic practices, defining their works in opposition to the often mindless spectacle and melodrama of Hollywood, and, closer to home, the superfluous formalism and decoration of Italian calligraphic films, and the upper-class escapism and frivolity of the so-called "white telephone" films. Still, the neorealists adapted and integrated techniques from a wide range of films and filmmakers in their works. For example, the major Russian directors of the 1920s were key models in helping the neorealists place progressive (though not necessarily communist or socialist) politics at the center of a revitalized cinema and create films intended to represent, analyze, and inspire social and political action. Although Eisenstein's style is traditionally contrasted with the neorealists' presumed disdain for interruptive and manipulative editing, he (and his cinematic model, Griffith) provided many examples of various kinds of montage effects that the neorealists adopted, including what might be called embedded or expanded montage (as Bazin shrewdly noted, sequences containing montage elements of a sequential drama, contrast, and combination, but without the cuts that normally define montage and piece together the "reality continuum") and what has been called ethical intercutting, in which the juxtaposition of shots furthers the real-time flow of the narrative but also makes an evaluative contrast and comment (for example, the shift in scene from the decadent luxury of Marina's dressing room to the austerity of the priest's apartment, from cocaine to cabbages as the images remind us, moves the plot along but also reinforces a moral judgment, and links the visual technique of *Open City* with such works as Griffith's *A Corner in Wheat*

[1909] and Eisenstein's *Strike* [1925] and, as Robert Burgoyne suggests, *October* [1928]).[3]

The influence of early German cinema on neorealism, and Rossellini in particular, is also critical. Tag Gallagher, one of the modern critics of Rossellini most keenly aware of the inadequacy of looking at *Open City* as "some sort of newsreel rather than carefully constructed art," convincingly describes *Open City* as an expressionist film: more specifically, as "somewhat realist in content but expressionist in means," especially in its "melodramatic manipulation of light"[4] – and, I might add, careful use of unbalanced and angular frame compositions, symbolic stylizations, and striking visualizations of how physical and psychological pressures bear down on individuals. The German influence goes far beyond expressionism: it is only scratching the surface to note that *Open City* is in many ways a street film like those of G. W. Pabst, a city film like (although often in opposition to) Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (1927), and a *Kammerspielfilm* like F. W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924), set at least in part in a claustrophobic and volatile domestic environment. (Among other shared details, the fuss over a wedding cake may well be Rossellini's homage to Murnau.) Finally, it should come as no surprise that in giving visual form to a master (and not coincidentally German) villain and to a potentially overwhelming sense of fear – Rossellini stated directly that "*Open City* is a film about fear, the fear felt by us all but by me in particular"[5] – Rossellini should recall Fritz Lang's Mabuse films and *M* (1931).

Perhaps the most important cinematic influence on neorealism, though, was the French. The later Italian films have much in common with the French films of the 1930s described by the term *poetic realism*, characterized by an unrelenting vision of people in hard times, a focus on the lower depths (that is, lower-class people, often criminals or social outcasts, hunted down or imprisoned, both metaphorically and literally), a dreary and dark *mise-en-scène*, a stress on the value of authenticity and integrity but also on the more common reality of betrayal, and a pessimistic sense of how human aspirations for dignity and freedom are defeated by fate. (This last element is modified in neorealism, in which the sense of people trapped by an impersonal and unyielding fate is replaced by an emphasis on man-made circumstances: still devastating and often overpowering,

but ones for which we must accept responsibility and may be able to change.) Even though the legacy of these French films derives largely from their "realism," their "poetic" aspects offered the neorealists vital reminders of the artistry that goes into chronicling reality, and the fragile beauty that can surface even in tales of the lower depths.

Although they learned much from many French filmmakers – including Marcel Carné, Julien Duvivier, and perhaps more subtly and surprisingly, René Clair, whose films have elements of fantasy, humor, and pathos, as well as social observation and critique – the most important director for the neorealists was undoubtedly Jean Renoir. Renoir worked on films in Italy, taught at the Centro Sperimentale film school, and had close personal ties with some of the Italian filmmakers, especially Visconti and Rossellini. Even a summary overview of Renoir – noting his progressive social and political views; antifascism and involvement in the Popular Front movement attempting to link otherwise disparate political groups in effective opposition to a common enemy; essential humanism; thoughtful and self-conscious artistry even while forging an art that was for far more than art's sake; working method combining careful preproduction planning and on-the-spot improvisation and adaptability; recurrent focus on themes of freedom and community; concern for history but particularly the history of the present; and use of a mobile camera and long takes, bringing the spectator close to a reality that seems to be preexisting and found, rather than artificially constructed – provides a precise overview of Rossellini as well.

There were other cinematic influences on neorealism, including a wide range of anthropological documentary films, like those of Robert Flaherty, that helped the neorealists develop what Visconti called an "anthropomorphic cinema," portraying people in their lived environment;[6] films of social concern and analysis, focusing on an entire society but through the perspective of one person's story, such as King Vidor's *The Crowd* (1928), which Rossellini mentions as particularly memorable;[7] early Neapolitan films centering on stories of the harshness of life and characterized by authentic settings and landscapes shot in natural light;[8] and even, as Peter Bondanella argues in his essay in the present volume, some of the increasingly "realistic" films of the Fascist period, which blended documentary and fictional elements. These and the other influences discussed above

do not, of course, completely account for or define neorealism, but provide a necessary reminder that there are aesthetic components and cinematic contexts essential to a full understanding of a style of filmmaking that often announces itself as in some ways antiaesthetic and anticinematic.

To get even closer to the heart of neorealism, we need to examine some specific aspects of its style, subjects, and, for lack of a better term, philosophy. The manifesto-like "Ten Points of Neorealism," published in a film journal in 1952 during one of the periodic reevaluations of neorealism, provides a handy summary:

> (1) A message: for the Italian filmmakers, cinema is a way of expression and communication in the true sense of this word. (2) Topical scripts inspired by concrete events; great historical and social issues are tackled from the point of view of the common people. (3) A sense of detail as a means of authentification. (4) A sense of the masses and the ability to surprise (De Sica) or manipulate them in front of camera (De Santis, Visconti): the protagonists are captured in their relationship to the masses. (5) Realism; but reality is filtered by a very delicate sensitivity. (6) The truth of actors, often nonprofessionals. (7) The truth of decor and a refusal of the studio. (8) The truth of the lighting. (9) Photography reminiscent of the reportage style stresses the impression of truth. (10) An extremely free camera; its unrestricted movements result from the use of postsynchronization.[9]

To a certain extent, as many critics have noted, some of the "choices" described above were made for the neorealist directors by the material conditions that prevailed: many oft-told (and not altogether reliable) legends, for example, repeat the point that studio resources were often not available, so they worked without them and took the camera to the streets, literally as well as figuratively. But the above ten points accurately describe essential identifying marks of classic neorealist films – each one, for example, directs us toward an important "truth" about *Open City* – and also convey the self-conscious determination of the neorealist directors not only to make films (a difficult enterprise under any historical circumstances, let alone during the war and postwar period) but to forge a new cinema of immediacy, relevance, popular appeal, and imaginative and political power. Their films "look" different, out of principle as well as

necessity, and they rejected or radically modified conventional filmmaking in order to create a blend of Kino-Eye and Kino-Fist, terms used by Dziga Vertov and Eisenstein, respectively, to describe cinema's responsibility – and power – to understand and change the world.

The films look different not only because of their visual style but also because of their subject matter. In repudiating the well-made and contrived fictional story and conventional, fully resolved happy ending, the neorealists emphasized the so-called *found* story, drawn from newspapers and popular reports. Their films gravitated toward the real problems of the masses of real people, and not surprisingly, poverty, displacement, fear, suffering, death, and despair are recurrent subjects: not as abstractions but as they are embodied in a recognizable landscape and familiar human figures in a widely shared historical drama with an ending yet to be determined. Children are prominent, not only reflecting a social reality (wars typically kill the young men and leave behind women, older people, and children), but also for their suggestive, even symbolic power in calling attention to the pathos of the present (one of the most memorable images in all of neorealism is that of the crying child in the last episode of Rossellini's *Paisà* (*Paisan*, 1946), standing in the midst of the bodies of his family killed by the Germans) and the hope – a fragile and even blighted hope, to be sure – for the future that rests with the next generation: this complex figuration makes the ending of *Open City* so rich and moving. Not only children, but the family and the community at large, rather than the exceptional individual as in conventional cinema, are the focus in neorealist films, and these social formations are presented as fundamental, but under siege, and in the process of being both reaffirmed and reconfigured.

With these subjects as their characteristic concerns, it is not surprising that the neorealists faced the same kind of backlash as the one that rose against earlier proponents of realism and naturalism, who were accused of neurotic grimness. But the underlying "philosophy" of neorealism, although strenuous and serious, is anything but grim and negative. The neorealists frequently spoke of a "hunger for reality," a cognitive and emotional need that films must address and attempt to satisfy, and could only do so with eyes wide open, as it were. And they envisioned aesthetics as escapist and irrelevant unless

integrally tied to ethics and the effort not only to analyze but also improve the quality of life for all – key characteristics of what Bazin rightly called their fundamental, even revolutionary humanism.[10]

Rossellini's comments in various interviews and essays about neorealism nicely illustrate the extent to which it was rooted in (and self-consciously associated with) a philosophy of life as well as of art. Activism is a key component, and describes not only the subject matter but the response of the spectator and intended effect of the films: "[F]or me a realist film is precisely one which tries to make people think. . . . What mattered to us was the investigation of reality, forming a relationship with reality."[11] Not surprisingly, Rossellini speaks highly of the documentary approach to reality: "Modern man feels a need to tell of things as they are, to take account of reality in an uncompromisingly concrete way, which goes with today's interest in statistics and scientific results."[12] But he also leaves ample room for something other than the mere recording of "facts." Despite his concern for scientific knowledge, he defines perception (and representation) in moral rather than technical terms: seeing "with humility" is above all what he recommends.[13] And he goes on to note that there is much of life and art that lies beyond empiricism: "I constantly come back, even in strictest documentary forms, to *imagination*, because one part of man tends towards the concrete, and the other to the use of the imagination, and the first must not be allowed to suffocate the second."[14] In assessing the kind of characters worthy of attention, Rossellini acknowledges the importance of both the one and the many. "Neo-realism is the greatest possible curiosity about individuals," he points out, but he then complements this, in one of his most often-quoted passages, by stressing the essential *coralità* of neorealism: "Realistic film is in itself a chorale. . . . I *began* by putting the accent on the collective above all."[15] Finally, when it comes to summing up neorealism in a few words, he deflects attention from technique and subject to focus on something far deeper: "My own personal neorealism is nothing but a moral stance that can be expressed in four words: *love of one's neighbor*."[16]

The fact that these last words come from an essay titled "I Am Not the Father of Neorealism" returns us to an irony I pointed out earlier: that neorealism is both a necessary and potentially slippery and limiting interpretive context for Rossellini, and especially for

Open City. My concern here isn't whether or not Rossellini considered himself a card-carrying neorealist but whether our expectations and critical foreknowledge prepare us sufficiently for such a remarkably complicated film as *Open City* or occasionally box us in too tightly. I would not have spent so much time above on neorealism if I weren't convinced that it helps accomplish the former, but we should still be wary of how some of the particulars and generalities ascribed to neorealism can mislead us about *Open City* unless they are carefully qualified.

For example, Marcus abstracts a hypothetical set of particular "rules governing neorealist practice," including

> location shooting, lengthy takes, unobtrusive editing, natural lighting, a predominance of medium and long shots, respect for the continuity of time and space, use of contemporary, true-to-life subjects, an uncontrived, open-ended plot, working-class protagonists, a nonprofessional cast, dialogue in the vernacular, active viewer involvement, and implied social criticism.[17]

But these fit *Open City* best when we recognize how the film pushes against each one: it was filmed partly on or near evocative real locations of the events it portrays or alludes to, but much of the action takes place in four carefully designed sets; medium and long shots indeed position the characters in their environment, apart from which they can't be fully understood, but the film is also punctuated by sudden close shots, all the more striking because of their rarity; much of the dramatic impact of the film comes from abrupt cuts, and many "wipes" alert us to rather than conceal quick scene shifts; natural lighting is frequently contrasted with highly effective, often expressionist artificial lighting effects; time and space are repeatedly broken up by ellipses and jumps; true-to-life subjects are colored by melodrama and exaggeration, and exist alongside caricatured figures of evil and weakness; the plot has some patently formulaic elements, and the ending is by no means thoroughly inconclusive; the term *working class* must be greatly expanded to incorporate all the major protagonists (this is part of the intention of the film, I should note, emphasizing our shared humanity); the cast includes experienced actors and actresses, used in conventional and unconventional ways; the dialogue highlights varieties of the vernacular, as well as several

styles and types of language identified as alien and threatening; spectators are construed to a certain extent as independently critical and reflective, but are also "directed" by carefully established patterns of shock and identification with and revulsion from certain characters; and, finally, the social criticism is direct, extensive, and central to the design of the film. Far from suggesting the uselessness of applying definitions of neorealism to *Open City*, I am trying to illustrate that the neorealism of *Open City* is dynamic, a process rather than a prescription, a complex negotiation among often contradictory or centrifugal forces and occasionally unexpected elements rather than a precise blueprint.

An emphasis on this kind of complex dynamism is also a necessary corrective to the general – and I think often inaccurate and misleading – inclination to define neorealism as substantially, to use Mira Liehm's term, an "aesthetics of rejection."[18] Several of the central claims in this regard are that neorealism is antirhetorical, antiformalist, and that on any number of levels, in keeping with its designation as "neo," it embodies and urges a revolutionary break with the past. Each of these claims can focus us on important aspects of *Open City* – and blind us to others. For example, *Open City* rejects the ultimately dehumanizing rhetoric of the Nazis, critiques the vacuous and distracting rhetoric of entertainment media, and exposes the shallowness of personal rhetoric that allows people to live a life of self-justifying lies. In these ways, Rossellini is indeed antirhetorical. But, as David Forgacs' essay in the present volume points out very insightfully, Rossellini has a carefully articulated rhetoric of his own: he assembles an ensemble of expressive techniques, both verbal and visual, intended to move and persuade, and he has designs on the viewer that go far beyond the fabled "open," nonjudgmental display of reality that is supposed to characterize neorealism.

Open City also clearly disavows the exercise of cinematic technique as an end in itself, keeps the spectator focused on the subject represented rather than the mode of representation, and is far more concerned with "truth" than "beauty," formal ingenuity, and artistic display. But we miss too much if we are not prepared to recognize how artful construction supports rather than undermines the film's purposes, how carefully and effectively Rossellini deploys cinematic techniques that shape rather than simply reflect "reality," and the

extent to which the film makes use of intertextual references, rightly acknowledging that art and increasingly film are part of our lived experience, our reality.

Finally, *Open City* rejects the nightmarish past – especially, of course, the prolonged fall into fascism – and calls for the end of that era and the beginning of a new one: in life, art, politics, morals, values, and social and personal relations. But much of the brilliance and honesty of the film comes from Rossellini's awareness that "rejection" is no simple matter, and that the process of creative resistance and opposition includes incorporation and transformation. As I argue in the introductory essay to this volume, at the heart of *Open City* is Rossellini's faith in recovery and reappropriation, using the forms and material of the past and taking back what had been seized and perverted. These are invaluable resources and strategies for anyone who would forge a new society – and a new cinema. We can rightly call this new cinema "neorealism," but we should do so very carefully, noting that Rossellini in general and *Open City* in particular embody but also contest, transform, and in some ways transcend common uses of the term.

NOTES

1. Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 18; Mira Liehm, *Passion and Defiance: Film in Italy from 1942 to the Present* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), p. 342, n. 21. For more detailed comments on other early uses of the term "neorealism," see Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "Neorealism in Italy, 1930–50: From Fascism to Resistance," *Romance Languages Annual* 3 (1991): 155–59.
2. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, pp. 3–29.
3. André Bazin, "An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism," in *What is Cinema?*, vol. 2, trans. Hugh Gray (1948; reprinted by Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), p. 28; Scott Simmon, *The Films of D. W. Griffith* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 36; Robert Burgoyne, "The Imaginary and the Neo-Real," *Enclitic* 3, no. 1 (1979): 24.
4. Tag Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*: *His Life and Films* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), pp. 178–79.
5. Roberto Rossellini, "A Discussion of Neorealism" (1952), reprinted in Rossellini, *My Method: Writings and Interviews*, ed. Adriano Aprà, trans. Annapaola Cancogni (New York: Marsilio, 1992), p. 41.

6. Luchino Visconti, "Anthropomorphic Cinema" (1943), reprinted in David Overbey, ed., *Springtime in Italy: A Reader on Neorealism* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979), pp. 83–85.
7. Roberto Rossellini, "A Discussion of Neorealism," p. 41.
8. See Liehm, *Passion and Defiance*, pp. 12–16, and Giuliana Bruno, *Streetwalking on a Ruined Map: Cultural Theory and the City Films of Elvira Notari* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).
9. Quoted in Liehm, *Passion and Defiance*, pp. 131–32.
10. Bazin, "An Aesthetic of Reality," p. 21, n. 22.
11. Rossellini, "A Discussion of Neorealism," p. 36.
12. Ibid., p. 35.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid., p. 37; emphasis in original.
15. I quote scattered phrases from "A Few Words About Neo-realism" (1953), reprinted in Overbey, *Springtime in Italy*, pp. 89–91 (emphasis in original). This piece is drawn from material in the above-quoted "A Discussion of Neorealism," but the translation in Overbey suits my purposes more than the one in *My Method*.
16. Roberto Rossellini, "I Am Not the Father of Neorealism" (1954), reprinted in *My Method*, p. 44; emphasis in original.
17. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, p. 22.
18. Liehm, *Passion and Defiance*, p. 132.

PETER BONDANELLA

2 The Making of *Roma città aperta*

The Legacy of Fascism and the Birth of Neorealism

PROBLEMATIC QUESTIONS IN THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE ITALIAN CINEMA

For many decades after its first screening, critical considerations of Rossellini's breakthrough film accepted several fundamental assumptions. Contemporary critics and historians argued that Rossellini's masterpiece embodied a new and innovative quest for "realism" in the postwar Italian cinema. Furthermore, they believed that this postwar realism (now dubbed "neorealism" – "new realism") marked a sharp break with the history of the Italian cinema and with the films made during the years that the Fascist regime governed Italy (1922–1943). The need to define the future direction of Italy's national cinema in terms that would underline discontinuity with the past rather than continuity was understandable at the time: all Italians of every ideological persuasion wanted desperately to put the war behind them. However, all too often such an attitude has created a misunderstanding about the historical development of Italian cinema in the crucial period that signals its transition from the years before 1945 to the years afterward. It is a fascinating paradox that *Roma città aperta* continued many of the stylistic characteristics of cinema produced during the Fascist era, but it embodied, at the same time, a clear antifascist ideology that attempted to reconcile all of the different and conflicting political positions of the various groups making up the Italian antifascist Resistance.[1]

All too many ideological, political, and personal interests were served in Italy with the facile assertion that Italian neorealism marked an abrupt break with the past. Directors, actors, scriptwriters, bureaucrats, and administrators in the cinema industry or in government institutions associated with the cinema all wanted to distance themselves from any link to the defeated Fascist regime, even though it was common knowledge that virtually everyone working in the industry during the Fascist period was obliged to request a Fascist Party membership to obtain employment. Rossellini was no exception to this rule. In fact, he requested and obtained a pre-dated membership card that would make it seem as if he had been an ardent supporter of the regime for many years earlier. In Italy during this time, a popular joke circulated that the abbreviation (PNF) for the Partito Nazionale Fascista (the National Fascist Party) really stood for the expression "per necessità familiare" ("because of family necessity").[2]

In Rossellini's case, the link to the past was doubly embarrassing because his career in the cinema was, in a substantial way, indebted to his close and sincere friendship with Vittorio Mussolini, the dictator's son. Vittorio was a fascinating figure and played an important role in the cinematic culture that had grown up among young "leftist" Fascist intellectuals – including such prominent postwar figures as Michelangelo Antonioni, Luchino Visconti, Carlo Lizzani, and Giuseppe De Santis. Vittorio Mussolini gathered these "young Turks" and maverick nonconformists around him and around his film journal, *Cinema*, and offered them overt encouragement and implicit protection from serious political censorship. Essays and film reviews published in *Cinema* contain the seeds of postwar Italian film theory – especially the view that realism (or neorealism) should be the preferred road for Italian postwar film to travel.

Recent studies of cinema under fascism have dramatically shifted our critical perspective on the cinema produced before 1945. Analysis of the works made during this period demonstrates the extremely high technical skills typical of the industry and the genius of a number of important directors and actors and actresses. Out of the more than 700 films produced under fascism, only a handful can be called propaganda pieces.[3] Even the use of the term "fascist cinema" is misleading, for the films actually espousing the truly original ideology of the regime (the corporate state, the glorification of conflict,

imperialism, the "Roman" heritage of Fascist Italy) are conspicuous by their virtual absence. It is more accurate to speak of "film during the Fascist period," "prewar cinema," or "wartime cinema," since so few of these films espouse any kind of ideology except a traditional nationalism, a conservative morality, and a Catholic religion.

Benito Mussolini was fond of citing Lenin's dictum that "the cinema is the most powerful weapon." His regime stressed the importance of the film industry. Mussolini frequently presided over important cinematic events, such as the opening of the huge studio complex outside of Rome known as Cinecittà on April 21, 1937 (a date coinciding with that of the mythical founding of the city of Rome), and the inauguration two years later of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, the professional film school still in existence (as is Cinecittà) that he ordered constructed. The regime's most important figures were frequent visitors to the Biennale, the important Venetian arts festival expanded to include cinema that the government supported enthusiastically. Mussolini's regime relied primarily upon the documentaries produced by the Istituto Luce (an abbreviation for the L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa), rather than fictional films, for any indoctrination it intended to extend to Italian popular culture. But like all dictatorships, the Fascist regime wanted to guide the course of popular culture. The Ministero per la Cultura Popolare (commonly referred to as the Minculpop) had an office called the Direzione Generale per la Cinematografia, and in 1934, Luigi Freddi (1895–1977), a former futurist follower of Marinetti and a staunch member of the Fascist party since its foundation in 1919, was named to direct this office. In 1940, the presidency of Cinecittà was added to Freddi's responsibilities.

Neither Freddi nor Vittorio Mussolini sought to make Italian cinema a mouthpiece for the regime. In point of fact, the two men wanted something entirely different: a profitable commercial industry that could eventually compete with its gigantic American competitor. In an essay published by *Cinema* in 1936 entitled "Emancipation of the Italian Cinema," Vittorio Mussolini called for the organization of the Italian cinema along the lines of the Hollywood model. Practicing what he preached, Mussolini went to America in 1937, and after being received by President Roosevelt in Washington, he visited Hollywood, where he was wined and dined by such stars

as Tyrone Power, Ida Lupino, Shirley Temple, and Betty Davis. Vittorio Mussolini actually set about founding a company designed to produce joint Italian-American ventures with Hal Roach. The firm, called R. A. M. (Roach and Mussolini), never materialized, but Vittorio Mussolini's desire to create such a company should underscore how little concerned he or his father was with propaganda in commercial feature films.[4]

Film historians, fearful of praising a period that has long been condemned for its politics, have too often ignored the fact that the search for realism in the cinema in Italy began not in 1945 but in the 1930s. This quest for a realist cinema that would become a quest for a neorealist cinema after 1945 was advocated primarily by the "Young Turks" in Vittorio Mussolini's intellectual circle, the left-wing fascist intellectuals and writers who would in the postwar period become, for the most part, Marxists. An excellent example of this early search for cinematic realism in a purely Italian (that is to say, not Hollywood-style) cinema may be found in an important essay published in 1933 called "The Glass Eye." Its author was Leo Longanesi, a famous journalist who was a staunch supporter of the regime in the 1930s and who even was reputed to have invented the popular slogan, "Mussolini is always right!" Scholars almost universally cite Cesare Zavattini's neorealist manifesto, "Some Ideas on the Cinema" (1952), as the best definition of the neorealist style in cinema.[5] Zavattini advocates nonprofessional actors, real locations, the rejection of Hollywood conventions (sets, actors, genres), and a documentary style of photography – all elements of the conventional definition of postwar Italian neorealism. Longanesi's manifesto of almost two decades earlier sounds remarkably similar to Zavattini's definition of neorealism, and both definitions are implicitly a rejection of Hollywood cinematic codes:

> We should make films that are extremely simple and spare in staging without using artificial sets – films that are shot as much as possible from reality. In fact, realism is what is lacking in our films. It is necessary to go right out into the street, to take the movie camera into the streets, the courtyards, the barracks, and the train stations. To make a natural and logical Italian film, it would be enough to go out in the street, to stop anywhere at all, and to observe what happens

> during a half hour with attentive eyes and with no preconceptions about style.[6]

The transition from the Fascist period to the immediate postwar period may well reflect a marked ideological change of position, but in terms of cinematic style, there is more continuity than contrast. Directors, writers, and critics in both periods often chose realism as their goal, even while disagreeing about the ideological program such film realism would support.

REALISM IN THE FASCIST CINEMA: AUGUSTO GENINA (1892–1957), FRANCESCO DE ROBERTIS (1902–59), AND THE "FICTIONAL DOCUMENTARY"

The sudden appearance of Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* startled non-Italian audiences because few non-Italians knew anything about developments in the cinema during the Fascist period. As a result, foreign critics and film scholars almost universally thought that Italian neorealism was an abrupt departure from the past rather than a way of making films that had its roots in the prewar film industry. Few Italian films were shown abroad after Italy became an international pariah during the Abyssinian War. Even fewer films that had a nationalistic or patriotic content would find a receptive audience abroad between 1936 and 1943, the year the Italian Fascist regime collapsed, except in the territory controlled by Nazi Germany and its satellites, in Franco's Spain, or in some Latin American countries that sympathized with the ideology of the Axis powers until the tide of the war turned against Germany and Italy. Yet, the period between the Spanish Civil War and the fall of Fascism in Italy witnessed the production of a number of films made with realist intent that also provided nationalistic support for Mussolini's foreign policy (including his foreign wars in the colonies, Greece, the Mediterranean, and Russia) in much the same way that Hollywood supported the Allied war effort after America's intervention into World War II. That is to say, these films follow traditionally patriotic themes and support the men in uniform, if not the regime that sent them to battle. They include: *Lo squadrone bianco* (*The White Squadron*, 1936) and *L'assedio dell'Alcazar* (*The Siege of the Alcazar*, 1940) by Augusto Genina; *Uomini*

sul fondo (*Men on the Bottom*, 1940) and *Alfa Tau!* (1942) by Francesco De Robertis; and Rossellini's so-called "fascist trilogy" comprised of *La nave bianca* (*The White Ship*, 1941), *Un pilota ritorna* (*A Pilot Returns*, 1942), and *L'uomo dalla croce* (*The Man with a Cross*, 1943). This is a remarkable body of work that easily stands comparison with the best of the postwar neorealist production in terms of its search for a film realism, and it is impossible to understand Rossellini's evolution as a director of neorealist films in the postwar period without coming to grips with the contributions made by both Genina and De Robertis to Rossellini's film style before 1945.

Realism in the Fascist period involved a formula best defined by Luigi Freddi in a letter he sent in 1940 to the producer of Genina's *L'assedio dell'Alcazar*, Renato Bassoli, about the increasingly important hybrid genre of the *documentario romanzato* or "fictional documentary." Freddi was preoccupied by whether or not the combination of the documentary-historical-realistic elements of *L'assedio dell'Alcazar* had worked in harmony with the fictional-emotional aspects of the work:

> While it is certain that the part which we have defined as "documentary" (that is, the real events recreated by technical and artistic means) attains a very high emotional content . . . the imaginative part, that is the dramatic part in the sense of the spectacle, the part created expressly to connect the evocation of historical events with the unrelated human events, seems to me to be very weak.[7]

The fictional documentary format combines an historical event with realistic or even documentary intent, often inserting documentary footage into the scenes recreated in a studio or shot on location.[8] The historical facts are usually combined with a sentimental love story to ensure that the audience is attracted to the story line by emotional appeal. For example, in the case of *Lo squadrone bianco*, which won the Mussolini Cup at the Venice Film Festival in 1936, a cavalry lieutenant deluded in a love affair has himself assigned to a native unit fighting rebels in Tripolitana (today's Libya), and he must face a severe commander who doubts his devotion to duty, considering him somewhat of a spoiled playboy. The lieutenant nevertheless fulfills his duty to the commander's satisfaction, and when his former lover visits the fort as a tourist, he realizes that his true vocation

is the life of a soldier. Genina's film is noteworthy for spectacularly beautiful shots of the desert, all done on location.

In the case of *L'assedio dell'Alcazar*, the historical event in question is the heroic defense of Toledo's Alcazar by Franco's garrison against a numerically superior Republican force. Documentary footage is combined with other scenes of the fortress recreated in the studio, but Genina includes on-location shots of the actual Alcazar, still in ruins, at the end of his film when Franco's army marching on Toledo relieves the siege and rescues his followers trapped within. The historical events are filmed in a realistic style, but the sentimental subplot provides an important secondary theme: a rich, spoiled woman takes refuge with the Fascist troops and learns to work for the common good by nursing the wounded, thereby justifying the love inspired by the film's military hero, who can love her only when she embraces the Franchist virtues of self-sacrifice and self-discipline.

L'assedio dell'Alcazar was praised by both Alessandro Pavolini, the well-known Fascist Minister of Popular Culture, and by a young Michelangelo Antonioni, then writing as a critic in the pages of *Cinema*. Antonioni emphasized what fascist intellectuals were frequently to call a "choral" quality in the work – a subordination of the individual to the entire group.[9] The use of this critical term, *coralità*, became identified with fascist realism and was infrequently employed after 1945. Nevertheless, in an important interview with Mario Verdone in 1952, Rossellini employed this precise term to describe his particular brand of film realism in both his prewar fascist war trilogy and his postwar neorealist trilogy:

> I have no formulae or preconceptions. But if I look back on my films, undoubtedly I do find elements in them that are constant and that are repeated not programmatically but, I repeat, naturally. In particular, a choral quality. The realistic film is intrinsically choral. The sailors of *La nave bianca* count as much as the people hiding in the hut at the ending of *L'uomo dalla croce*, as much as the population of *Roma città aperta*, and as much as the partisans of *Paisà*.[10]

Rossellini's interview certainly underlines a continuity of style (but certainly not of content) between the two periods, the cinema of the Fascist period and that produced during the neorealist postwar era.

The combination of a political or historical event with a love affair became the standard means of combining fact and fiction, realism and fantasy in films dealing with warfare in the Fascist period. Rossellini thus embraced a ready-made formula for works in this genre in both his fascist trilogy and in his neorealist trilogy. Other important fictional documentaries were produced in cooperation with various branches of the Italian government, although very little direct control over the films' ideological content seems to have been exercised by the regime. In particular, at the Centro Cinematografico in the Department of the Navy, Francesco De Robertis made a number of important fictional documentaries while Vittorio Mussolini (by this time holding the rank of captain in the Italian air force) encouraged the making of such films at the Centro Fotocinematografico within the Department of the Air Force. De Robertis was instrumental in adding nonprofessional actors to the formula for the fictionalized documentary. His patriotic film *Uomini sul fondo*, the story of the undersea rescue of a sunken submarine, opens with the proud declaration, "The officers, noncommissioned officers, and the crew of one of our long-distance submarines took part in the action."[11] This influential film was made with the Department of the Navy but was nevertheless produced by a commercial company, La Scalera Film. In it, De Robertis employs an editing style much closer to Eisenstein than to postwar neorealism (something Rossellini immediately thereafter imitated in *La nave bianca*), skillfully focusing upon the men and their machines and creating with that editing a highly dramatic rhythm. De Robertis' *Alfa Tau!*, which appeared during the same year that Rossellini's *La nave bianca* was screened, embraces the fictionalized documentary formula completely, whereas *Uomini sul fondo* is essentially a documentary pure and simple. Its opening titles underline the fact that its actors are nonprofessionals, but in this case, the sailor who becomes the focus of the narrative's main action (Seaman Stagi) also plays himself and manages to repeat a heroic gesture attributed to the Risorgimento hero, Enrico Toti, for whom the submarine on which he serves is named:

> In this story, all the elements respond to a *historical and environmental realism*. The humble seaman, who is its protagonist, really lived the episode that is relived in the story. In like manner, the role that every

> other character has *in the event* corresponds to the role each one of them had in the *reality of life*.[12]

There is far less nationalistic propaganda in this film made for the Department of the Navy than is present in the commercial film shot by Genina. For example, the losses suffered by the Italian navy are not concealed, nor is the poverty of the means at the disposal of the Italian sailors ignored. The effects of the war on the home front are dramatized, with scenes of civilians racing to bomb shelters. The camera follows a number of sailors home on shore leave, providing proof of the war's cost: one of the sailor's homes is even destroyed by Allied bombardments. Humor, an element Rossellini would later use to great effect in *Roma città aperta*, pokes fun at the pretensions of the regime: a patriotic owner of a *pensione* mimics the regime's slogans, such as "Tutto al combattente!" – "Everything for the Fighting Man!" – and she is even named Signora Italia. De Robertis also alternates moments of high dramatic tension with those of comic relief, a technique Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* will master to perfection. The film actually ends on a comic note: the submarine on which Seaman Stagi serves fights a duel with a British submarine, exchanging torpedoes and then surfacing to engage in a gun battle. Just when the Italians could have ended the duel with a victory, the deck gun jams, causing Stagi to become exasperated and to throw his boot at the enemy in disgust. De Robertis' complex cross-cutting between four different sailors on leave and his dramatic montage editing on board the ship, when combined with the nonprofessional nature of the entire cast, provide an excellent and original model for a cinematic style within the genre of the war film that any postwar neorealist director could easily adopt as a step toward a more realistic cinema.

ROSSELLINI'S FASCIST TRILOGY: THE FOUNDATIONS OF NEOREALISM

Roberto Rossellini's film career began under the patronage of Vittorio Mussolini and in cooperation with De Robertis and military agencies charged with making films that bolstered the image of the Italian air force, army, and navy. While such films were rarely merely

propaganda vehicles, they were certainly intended to cast the best light possible upon Italy's armed forces. Rossellini, in fact, established himself as one of Italy's most promising young directors during this period with three works of great interest. A commercial company, Scalera Films, produced what has come to be called Rossellini's fascist trilogy.[13] Both Vittorio Mussolini and De Robertis had an important role to play in the works. The credits for *La nave bianca* list no director, but it is clear that Rossellini and De Robertis both made contributions to the film. While Rossellini did most of the direction, De Robertis provided the script, the story idea, and assistance for his protégé. The opening credits underline the continuity of style between Rossellini's *La nave bianca* and De Robertis' earlier *Uomini sul fondo*:

> As in *Uomini sul fondo*, all the characters in this naval story are taken from their environment and from the reality of their lives, and they are followed through a spontaneous realism [*verismo*] of their expressions and the simple humanity of those feelings that make up the ideological world of each of them. The nurses of the Voluntary Corps, the officers, the non-commissioned offers, and the crews took part. The story was shot on the hospital ship *Arno* and on one of our battleships.[14]

De Robertis' influence is clearly visible, especially in the brilliant first half of the film that focuses upon a naval battle in the Mediterranean. In this section of the film, the influence of Eisenstein is also everywhere apparent, particularly in the fascinating editing patterns that juxtapose faces, equipment, and the firing of naval cannons. Eisenstein's theories of filmmaking had already been partially translated and discussed by Rome's leading intellectuals associated with the cinema, with Vittorio Mussolini's journal *Cinema*, and with the Centro Sperimentale's journal, *Bianco e nero*. Eisenstein's major films had even been screened in Fascist Italy, if not in large public showings, at least in film clubs paradoxically supported by a fascist regime that claimed Russian Bolshevism as its mortal enemy. Therefore, it is not surprising in the least that the Russian director's influence can be detected in films approved by a fascist regime. Eisenstein's impact upon Italian cinema in this period stands as yet another proof that political censorship of the Italian cinema on ideological grounds never

1. ***La nave bianca*** **(1941). Documentary footage showing the high quality of care given to Italian wounded on the hospital ship that is the focus of the film. (Film Stills Archive of the Museum of Modern Art, New York)**

extended to excluding the possibility of learning something important from an artist who espoused an entirely different kind of political ideology.

The fictionalized documentary aspect of *La nave bianca* comes into play primarily in the second part of the film, where Rossellini uses the wounding of a sailor to underline how well Italian fighting men are treated aboard the hospital ships of the regime (see Fig. 1). The dominant image of the entire film, however, remains the dramatic picture of men trapped inside metal monsters, staring intently at dials, gauges, and instruments while they are engaged in a dramatic struggle of life and death upon the high seas. Everything in the naval battle is taken from an actual engagement, but the documentary footage is edited so brilliantly and so dramatically by Rossellini that certain scenes of the work seem as if they have been lifted from an anthology of Russian cinema (see Fig. 2).

Un pilota ritorna continues the technique of the fictionalized documentary by combining a personal story with a larger, historical

account of the air war over Greece. Some documentary footage is exploited to show Italian air raids against the enemy. The film has a sentimental plot and a traditional focus on a glamorous, Hollywood-style protagonist played by matinee idol Massimo Girotti. Girotti is a heroic pilot who escapes from English captivity, steals an airplane, and returns safety to his Italian base to fly again. Girotti's superhuman exploits stand in marked contrast to the anonymous heroes of Rossellini's *La nave bianca*. In fact, *Un pilota ritorna*'s overly complex plot mixes this heroic action with a love affair that the pilot has with a doctor's daughter while in captivity, and does so in a very confused manner, making this particular work the weakest by far of the fascist trilogy. It is interesting to note is that Vittorio Mussolini, writing as Tito Silvio Mursino, provided the story idea, and Michelangelo Antonioni contributed to the script. The style of this second film stands apart from that of *La nave bianca*. Instead of an editing style indebted to Eisenstein, Rossellini uses a very conventional assortment of wipes, fades, and transitions employing a series of newspaper headlines. Future neorealist director Giuseppe De Santis' critical review of the film in 1942 did underline Rossellini's bold attempt to have every soldier (Italian, Greek, English) speak his native language, without providing translations in the original film's subtitles.[15] This linguistic realism will play a crucial role in Rossellini's future neorealist classics *Roma città aperta* and *Paisà*. Exterior, realistic locations also play an important role in the film, although many of the interiors were reconstructed at Cinecittà.

If propagandistic glorification of the fliers was the intent of *Un pilota ritorna*, it is hard to imagine that it had that effect. Seen today, the class divisions evident in the Italian air force between the enlisted men and the elite pilots – who live a life of luxury, are served by waiters with white gloves, and reflect the upper-class origins of their families – speak eloquently of the inequality of the regime, something Rossellini no doubt intended. But viewers accustomed to seeing documentaries of other armed forces during the Second World War cannot help but be struck by the poverty of means at the disposal of the Italian air force: men in the bombers pass notes back and forth over the din of the engines because their planes have no radios; even their oxygen masks seem to be jerry-rigged contraptions that may

2. ***La nave bianca*** **(1941). Documentary footage of Italian naval ships in combat used in Rossellini's first film of his fascist trilogy. (Film Stills Archive of the Museum of Modern Art, New York)**

not work. Although the scenes from the war will certainly persuade few viewers of the technical prowess of the Fascist regime, the sequences devoted to the effects of the war – the future subject of the neorealist trilogy that established Rossellini's fame after the war – are far more eloquent. Here, Rossellini's camera avoids painting a falsely optimistic picture of Italy's chances in the war and, in fact, reveals the human side of the misery associated with the war in a manner that is quite surprisingly honest and forthright for a man who was identified by the regime as one of its most promising directors. There is also little propagandistic intent, as the brutal effects of the war on civilians and soldiers alike are not glossed over.

The third part of Rossellini's fascist trilogy, *L'uomo dalla croce*, is both more ambitious and more puzzling than the other two films that precede *Roma città aperta*: more ambitious, in that the film represents a larger production, with crowd scenes from Russian battles filmed outside Rome; more puzzling, in that in some respects,

its ideological edge is far sharper and the timing of its production more problematic. The film's script was based upon the true story of an army chaplain who died in the Russian campaign, an anticipation of the heroic partisan priest of *Roma città aperta*. In his postwar memoirs, Luigi Freddi remarked that at the time *L'uomo dalla croce* was being filmed, Rossellini was "perhaps the only man who decisively turned toward the film of political propaganda and war."[16] Indeed, Rossellini shot the film between July and September 1942, and released it in June 1943, only a month before the Allies invaded Sicily and caused the collapse of Mussolini's government. By June 1943, the disastrous Axis defeats at Stalingrad and in North Africa would be fresh in every Italian's mind. Thus, it seems amazing that such a clever man as Rossellini would have involved himself in such an obviously badly timed film project at a moment when most of his contemporaries were beginning to realize that Italy had lost the war and were busily preparing to assert their long-suppressed leftist sympathies or conceal their connections to the fallen regime. Unlike the other two works in Rossellini's fascist trilogy, *L'uomo dalla croce* contains neither the very interesting montage editing indebted to Eisenstein nor the sentimental story line linking a private love story with historical events that characterize the first two works. Even the use of nonprofessional actors seems heavy handed. Rossellini's friend Alberto Tavazzi plays the martyred chaplain (he would also appear briefly in *Roma città aperta* as the chaplain at the execution of Don Pietro), but his inexpressiveness and wooden motions add little to the film. The documentary footage that provided touches of realism to the first two works is now abandoned. In the place of such sequences, Rossellini creates a "realistic" battle scene outside Rome at Ladispoli following the codes of the commercial cinema of the day. In many respects, *L'uomo dalla croce* represents a step backward from the impressive stylistic innovations of the first two war films (see Fig. 3).

The link between *L'uomo dalla croce* and *Roma città aperta* lies paradoxically in the content of the two works – the story of a priest who gives his life in the service of his church, his God, and his country. In *L'uomo dalla croce*, the concluding title makes it clear that Rossellini considers communism a threat to civilization and believes

3. *L'uomo dalla croce* (1943). Rossellini employs convincing re-creations of combat scenes on the steppes of Russia shot in the Roman countryside for the third film of his fascist trilogy. (Photograph Archives of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, Rome)

that the priest's sacrifice follows the tenets of Christianity: "This film is dedicated to the memory of the military chaplains who fell in the crusade against those without God in defense of their country and in order to bring the light of truth and justice even to the land of the barbaric enemy"[17] (see Fig. 4). The iconography of the film's final shot before the last title, showing the chaplain with blood on his brow like the scourged Christ, underscores the Christian character of the priest's death. Something very similar on a visual level takes place in *Roma città aperta* when the partisan leader, a Communist, dies under torture without revealing the Resistance's secrets. He, too, is photographed in a manner that suggests the iconography of Christ's death. But the transition from a Christ-like priest fighting godless communism in Russia to a Christ-like Marxist partisan fighting Nazis in Rome is a stunning shift of ideological perspective (see Fig. 5). Although Rossellini's political views were always somewhat naive and even conformist to an extent, there is little doubt that his belief in Christianity was sincerely held and that Rossellini saw no

4. ***L'uomo dalla croce*** **(1943). The fascist chaplain (Alberto Tavazzi) administers the last rites to a dying soldier before losing his own life in a heroic Christ-like gesture that prefigures the death of Don Pietro in** ***Roma città aperta*****. (Photograph Archives of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, Rome)**

contradiction in showing both a Catholic priest and a Communist partisan leader walking together in the ways of the Lord, to paraphrase the words of the partisan priest in the postwar classic.

FASCISM'S LEGACY AND THE PRODUCTION OF *ROMA CITTÀ APERTA*

With the fall of fascism and the victory of the Allies over the Axis powers, there was little possibility that the discredited fascist ideology of the past would dominate the content of any postwar Italian film. Nevertheless, a description of how Rossellini managed to create *Roma città aperta* amidst the confusion, chaos, and economic deprivation of occupied Rome underlines the stylistic continuity, if not the ideological continuity, between the Fascist and the neorealist period rather than any dramatic hiatus between the cinema of the two periods. Anything else would be truly surprising, since Rossellini's cinema was one based upon his personal quirks and friendships, his eclectic but not particularly intellectual approach to film style, and

5. ***Roma città aperta*** **(1945). As he is being tortured, the partisan leader Manfredi (Marcello Pagliero) is captured by Rossellini's camera in a pose reminiscent of the crucified Christ. (Film Stills Archive of the Museum of Modern Art, New York)**

the rapidly changing political and cultural environment around him. Never one to espouse a coherent ideological perspective, Rossellini's *Roma città aperta* was destined to be not a programmatic lesson in film realism but instead a hybrid creation, born of a number of different artistic impulses, some even as contradictory as their creator.

Between the fall of Mussolini's regime in September 1943 and the Allied liberation of Rome in June 1944, Rossellini made preparations to shoot a film tentatively entitled *Scalo merci* (*Freight Station*). He was assisted on the preparations for the film by Giuseppe De Santis – one of the left-wing Fascist critics of *Cinema* who would soon make a reputation as a postwar Marxist director of several neorealist classics, including *Riso amaro* (*Bitter Rice*, 1948). *Scalo merci* was intended to provide a realistic depiction of the working-class environment of the San Lorenzo district of Rome, but after the Allies bombed the area, Rossellini abandoned the project and apparently only shot a few

minutes of film stock. The project was later taken up by Rossellini's friend Marcello Pagliero, who would be cast as the Marxist partisan leader of Rossellini's *Roma città aperta*, and the film was released in 1946 as *Desiderio* (*Desire*).

As soon as the Germans evacuated the Eternal City, Rossellini began a long series of collaborations with a number of scriptwriters to produce a project about Rome under the German occupation. The story of the film's creation has inspired a number of anecdotal accounts, all of which underline the serendipitous nature of its international success and the absolute astonishment of all involved that such a film would achieve international acclaim almost immediately.[18] In the film historical literature, critics often make erroneous assertions about the programmatic intentions of Rossellini, viewing him as a director supposedly in search of a film realism when *Roma città aperta* was produced. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Film historians repeat the stale notion that Rossellini worked on real or "authentic" locations because the studios of Cinecittà were filled with refugees (something that later actually took place). But the Fascist cinema, as I have demonstrated in the above discussion of earlier works by Genina, De Robertis, and Rossellini himself, and of the manifesto of Longanesi published as early as 1933, had already proposed on-location shooting as a significant method of achieving realism in the cinema. Actually, in *Roma città aperta* Rossellini employs fewer authentic locations than in *La nave bianca*, for example. Moreover, some of the most celebrated locations – the Gestapo headquarters and the torture room where the evil Major Hartmann and his lesbian henchwoman, Ingrid, observe the torture of Resistance patriots; Don Pietro's sacristy; the living room where the Gestapo officers relax while the torture takes place – are all sets constructed in the vacant building on Rome's Via degli Avignonesi. This spot may be considered the location of the birth of Italian neorealism and is today immortalized by a plaque on the Roman street. This street near Via Nazionale also played a crucial role in the international reception of *Roma città aperta*, for at Number 36, a certain Signora Tina Trabucchi operated one of Rome's most famous brothels. According to Federico Fellini, out of that establishment staggered an American GI named Rod Geiger, who tripped over the electric cable supplying power to Rossellini's set. Geiger became interested in the film and eventually

persuaded Rossellini to give him the American distribution rights to the work for a small sum. The exported film became an international success and ran for many months in New York alone. Geiger would later distribute *Paisà* for Rossellini and plan the creation of an American neorealist version of *Christ in Concrete*, the very successful Italian-American novel about Italian emigrants in New York written by Pietro Di Donato. Geiger intended this adaptation to be a vehicle for Rossellini, but it was eventually shot by Edward Dmytryk (one of the original Hollywood Ten) in 1948.

Like on-location camera work, nonprofessional actors had been used extensively by various directors during the Fascist era, including Rossellini in the war trilogy. There is no doubt that this technique reached its height in the postwar neorealist masterpieces of De Sica and Visconti, not to mention *Paisà*, but Rossellini did not limit himself to this practice in *Roma città aperta*. He indeed included a number of nonprofessionals in his cast. Maria Michi, who plays the role of Marina, was an usher at the Barberini Cinema, but she most certainly landed the part because she was scriptwriter Sergio Amidei's girlfriend. Harry Feist, who played the monster German officer, was a dance hall entertainer. Marcello Pagliero, playing the part of the partisan leader, had already worked in the cinema as a director, and he was chosen for the part primarily because he was a friend. Other figures – Nando Bruno as the sacristan and Edoardo Passarelli as the policeman – came from the acquaintances that Rossellini knew from the popular variety theater of the times. Casting friends in the film demonstrates the occasional, provisional nature of the production. However, the true stars of the film – Aldo Fabrizi as the partisan priest, Don Pietro, and Anna Magnani as Pina, the strong-willed woman murdered by the Germans on her wedding day – were anything but nonprofessional actors. They were consummate professionals but were previously typecast as comic, vaudeville entertainers. In fact, the particular chemistry of their personalities had already functioned quite well in a comic film directed by Mario Bonard, *Campo de' fiori* (*Campo de' fiori Square*, 1943), in which the two actors had been paired in an amusing look at popular customs among the vendors and street salespeople at the open-air market in that location.

Nothing demonstrates the fact that *Roma città aperta* was created outside the rigid boundaries of a programmatic search for a particular

kind of realism more than the history of the creation of the film's script. The fact that the film's script was such a major undertaking also undercuts another critical myth about neorealism: that it was a cinema of improvisation. In fact, the genius of neorealist cinema often lies in the fact that its scripts are so well constructed and so well written, and this is certainly the case with Rossellini's *Roma città aperta*. An Oscar nomination recognized the genius behind the script and the many hands that contributed to its excellence, but the manner in which the story was put together also underlines the hybrid nature of the film's production. Rossellini's original idea, entitled *Storie di ieri* (*Stories of Yesterday*), proposed a presentation of the historical events leading up to the execution on April 4, 1944, of Don Giuseppe Morosini, a Catholic priest active in the antifascist Resistance. Thus, Rossellini would repeat to some extent the thematic focus of *L'uomo dalla croce* – the death of a Catholic martyr – now in the service of quite a different kind of political ideology. Meanwhile, and unbeknownst to Rossellini, Sergio Amidei, a scriptwriter with strong Marxist sympathies, had begun writing a script about the black market that had sprung up during the occupation by both warring armies in the city of Rome, the Germans and the Allies. After Rossellini and Amidei discussed the direction any future collaboration between them on a film about occupied Rome should take, they decided to combine Amidei's narrative with a narrative about the German occupation of Rome. At about the same time, a Neapolitan journalist named Albert Consiglio suggested to Rossellini that he do a story about a partisan priest named Don Pietro Pappagallo, and when a producer had been found for the work, Consiglio combined his fictitious character with the historical figure of Don Morosini to create the sketch for the character that would eventually become the film's Don Pietro. Amidei added another element from recent history, revolving around Maria Teresa Gullace, a pregnant working-class woman shot by Germans on Via Giulio Cesare near the Vatican. This brutal shooting occurred when the woman ran after her husband, who had been arrested in one of the frequent dragnets the Nazis used to recruit forced labor for the war effort. The episode was brilliantly recreated by Rossellini in the most famous sequence of *Roma città aperta*. After numerous revisions, this woman was transformed into Pina, the role Anna Magnani made famous.

Rossellini's method of working with scriptwriters was to keep them separate as much as possible while he worked with each contributor on various aspects of the script that they were best equipped to flesh out. Because of Amidei's political leanings, it was Amidei who suggested – indeed, insisted – upon putting a Marxist partisan, Manfredi, into the story line (based, like Pina and Don Pietro, on a real-life character, in this case a well-known partisan leader, Celeste Negarville). Rossellini may well have been satisfied to focus upon the heroic actions of the priest, given his Catholic and essentially conservative background, not to mention his earlier praise of a priest's bravery and selfless sacrifice in *L'uomo dalla croce*. But his cooperation with Amidei encouraged the director to view the Resistance as a collaborative effort of many groups – Catholics, Communists, monarchists, former soldiers and policemen – a truly national and popular movement. The result was a picture of the Resistance that was far more accurate in its ideological eclecticism than many of the portraits of the Resistance in the cinema after 1945 that invented a false picture of the Italian Resistance as a movement that was indebted almost entirely to the Italian Communist Party.

Rossellini carefully balanced contributions to the script by Amidei with work by a scriptwriter with an entirely different ideological slant: Federico Fellini. Rossellini wanted Fellini to work on the script for a variety of reasons. In the first place, he was a close friend of Aldo Fabrizi, and it was largely Fellini's encouragement that led Fabrizi to abandon his normal comic, vaudeville-style role for a tragic part. Secondly, Fellini was a skillful writer and had already acquired a national following for his contributions to the weekly humor magazine, *Marc'Aurelio*, a periodical that served as a training ground for a number of important Italian scriptwriters and directors – not only Fellini but also Cesare Zavattini, Bernardo Zapponi, and Ettore Scola, to name only the most famous. *Marc'Aurelio* was the most popular magazine read during the Fascist era, with a circulation of several hundred thousands of copies, and its link to the postwar Italian cinema is yet another indication of the continuity between fascist and postwar film culture. Fellini's contributions to *Roma città aperta* counterbalanced the dogmatic tendencies of Amidei and injected an important note of humor into the plot. It would be hard to imagine anyone but Fellini scripting a number of the comic one-liners the

film contains, and he most certainly did write the famous frying-pan episode in which Don Pietro knocks out an old man with the kitchen utensil in order to silence him before the Fascist troops search his bedroom.[19]

Far from being the programmed result of a conscious search for a film realism, *Roma città aperta* contained a hybrid combination of the many diverse elements that characterized the fascist cinema: melodramatic cinematic codes with stereotypical characters; vaudeville actors; slapstick comedy; ideologically loaded characters; professionals and nonprofessionals mixed together; some location work combined with a great deal of traditional shooting within constructed sets; and a documentary-style photography that also had its antecedents in the cinema before 1945. While maintaining important links in its style to Italy's cinematic past, a past dominated by a fascist regime and its totalitarian ideology, Rossellini's masterpiece embraced a new and revolutionary content based upon an antifascist ideology that underlined the cooperation of many diverse and even contradictory groups combating the Nazis in occupied Rome. Even the complex account of how the magnificent script was written by a number of hands – including the Marxist Amidei and the nonpolitical Fellini – seems to mirror the new era of class cooperation dawning with the arrival of the Allies and the defeat of the Germans and their Fascist allies. Multiple authors not only added variety but also established a model for the cross-party alliances that were at the heart of the film's antifascism.

What is miraculous about Rossellini's film is that it mixes many traditional elements together in what can only be described as a serendipitous and original creation, the whole of which is surely greater than its parts. Later, and with some justification, critics and film historians would declare that Rossellini subsequently moved toward a far more original brand of film realism in *Paisà*, a film that made far less of a splash in the international market. *Roma città aperta*, however, was the breakthrough film that announced the birth of Italian neorealism. By Rossellini's ingenious blending of the old and the new, its combination of the best stylistic achievements produced by the Italian cinema during the Fascist period with a new spirit of rebirth and hope linked to the antifascist Resistance, *Roma città aperta* captured the spirit of the times. Its unique status as a transitional

masterpiece links two intrinsically related periods of Italian film culture even while its international success announced the dawn of an entirely new era in the history of Italian cinema.

NOTES

1. Elsewhere I have argued against the simplistic critical equation that neorealism was primarily a cinema of realism and have underlined the melodramatic or symbolic qualities of many neorealist classics standing in direct opposition to the many ideologically slanted discussions of this particular moment in the history of the cinema. See Bondanella, *Italian Cinema: From Neorealism to the Present*, 3rd ed. (New York: Continuum, 2001), Chapters 2 and 3; and *The Films of Roberto Rossellini* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Chapters 1 through 6. For more information on Italian cinema during the Fascist period, see Gian Piero Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano: Dal neorealismo al miracolo economico 1945–1959*, vol. 3 (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1993), and *Storia del cinema italiano: Il cinema del regime 1929–1945*, vol. 2 (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1993); James Hay, *Popular Film Culture in Fascist Italy: The Passing of the Rex* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987); Marcia Landy, *Fascism in Film: The Italian Commercial Cinema, 1931–1943* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), and *The Folklore of Consensus: Theatricality in the Italian Cinema, 1930–1943* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998); Francesco Savio, *Ma l'amore no: realismo, formalismo, propaganda e telefoni bianchi nel cinema italiano di regime (1930–1943)* (Milan: Sonzogno, 1975); and K. R. M. Short, ed., *Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II*. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983).
2. See Tag Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*: *His Life and Films* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), pp. 77–78.
3. Savio's indispensable analysis, in *Ma l'amore no*, of every feature film produced between 1930 and 1943, makes this perfectly clear.
4. Mussolini's essay is entitled "Emancipazione del cinema italiano," *Cinema* 1, #6 (1936), pp. 213–15. R. A. M. is discussed by Gianni Rondolino in *Rossellini* (Turin: UTET, 1989), p. 35; Mussolini's American visit is noted by Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, p. 52.
5. Zavattini's statement can be read in two versions and two different translations because the Italian original was a radio broadcast subsequently transcribed and published in various places: "Some Ideas on the Cinema," in Richard Dyer MacCann, ed., *Film: A Montage of Theories* (New York: Dutton, 1966), pp. 216–28; and "A Thesis on Neo-Realism," in David Overbey, ed., *Springtime in Italy: A Reader on Neo-Realism* (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1979), pp. 67–78.
6. Leo Longanesi, "The Glass Eye," in Adriano Aprà and Patrizia Pistagnesi, eds., *The Fabulous Thirties: Italian Cinema, 1929–1944* (Milan: Electra International, 1979), p. 50.

7. Cited from Gianni Rondolino, "Italian Propaganda Films," in Short, ed., *Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II*, p. 236; for the complete Italian text, see Luigi Freddi, *Il cinema* (Rome: L'Arnia, 1949), I: pp. 207–11.
8. For the most comprehensive discussion of Genina's cinema, see Sergio G. Germani and Vittorio Martinelli, eds., *Il cinema di Augusto Genina* (Paisan di Prato: Edizioni Biblioteca dell'Immagine, 1989).
9. For the complete text of Antonioni's review, see Savio, *Ma l'amore no*, pp. 29–30.
10. Cited in Bondanella, *The Films of Roberto Rossellini*, p. 37 (my translation of the Italian original). The published English translation of this important statement in Roberto Rossellini, *My Method: Writings and Interviews*, ed. Adriano Aprà (New York: Marsilio, 1992), p. 37, erroneously translates the technical term *coralità* as "human warmth," thus completely distorting the historical meaning of the term during the Fascist period, that understood by Rossellini: an emphasis upon a group of people acting in unison as if in a chorus in which no individual voices may be distinguished.
11. Savio, *Ma l'amore no*, p. 379 (all translations from Savio's work are mine).
12. Ibid., p. 11 (italics in the original film titles).
13. Commentary on Rossellini's three prewar films in English may be found in the following: Bondanella, *The Films of Roberto Rossellini*, Chapter 2; Peter Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), Chapters 2 through 4; and Ruth Ben-Ghiat, "The Fascist War Trilogy," in David Forgacs, Sarah Lutton, and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, eds., *Roberto Rossellini: Magician of the Real* (London: British Film Institute, 2000), pp. 20–35.
14. Savio, *Ma l'amore no*, p. 227. The credits employ the technical term *verismo*, the word Italians use to describe the literary movement of naturalism in Italy championed by Giovanni Verga, the Sicilian novelist postwar neorealist critics and directors hoped to emulate in their films and the masterpiece of whom, *I Malavoglia* (*The House by the Medlar Tree*, 1881), Luchino Visconti rendered into what many critics consider to be the greatest of neorealist films, *La terra trema* (*The Earth Trembles*, 1948).
15. For the text of the review, see Savio, *Ma l'amore no*, p. 269.
16. Freddi, *Il cinema*, II: p. 219 (my translation).
17. My translation from the videocassette of the film.
18. For an important discussion of the creation of *Roma città aperta*, see Adriano Aprà, ed., *Città aperta di Roberto Rossellini* (Rome: Comune di Roma Assessorato alla Cultura, 1994).
19. For a fuller discussion of Fellini's contributions to neorealism in numerous scripts and his work with Rossellini, see my *The Cinema of Federico Fellini* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), and my *The Films of Federico Fellini* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

MILLICENT MARCUS

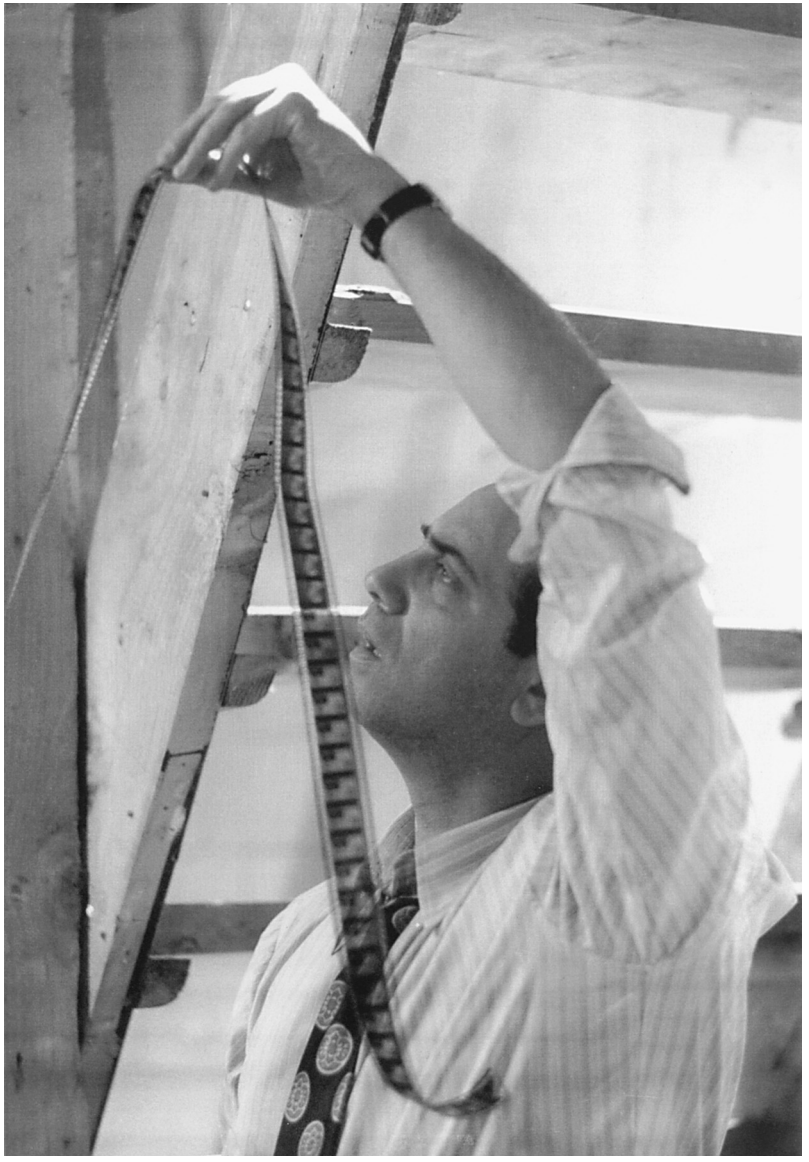
3 *Celluloide* and the Palimpsest of Cinematic Memory

Carlo Lizzani's Film of the Story Behind *Open City*[1]

It is 1945, Rome has recently been liberated, and Roberto Rossellini joins forces with a scriptwriter, Sergio Amidei, to make a film about the courage and suffering of Romans under the recent Nazi occupation. They face every imaginable obstacle to the realization of their project: a war-torn economy, reluctant producers, lack of raw materials (celluloid was especially scarce), and a film industry wedded to the aesthetics of escape (see Fig. 6). Vaudeville stars Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi are persuaded to join the cast, despite the appallingly severe shortage of funds to meet their salary demands. Rossellini hires Federico Fellini, Fabrizi's gag writer, to join his troupe, and Fellini in turn convinces Fabrizi to lower his price. Personal upheavals threaten to derail the production at every turn. Amidei and his girlfriend, Maria Michi (who plays Marina), break up and reconcile any number of times; Magnani's stormy love affair with the young and unreliable Massimo reaches crisis level in mid-shooting; and her son is afflicted with a dire malady. Producers come and go, plagued by inadequate resources or daunted by the novelty of the project. After a sneak preview, a noted distributor is shocked and pronounces the film unmarketable. In one of the many serendipities that mark the birth of *Open City*, an American soldier named Rod Geiger discovers that Rossellini has tapped into the power supply used to illuminate the G.I. dance hall next door to the studio. When Geiger realizes that he has stumbled onto a movie set, his anger gives way to fascination and he gallantly offers to distribute the finished product in America. After a number of other picaresque turns of events, Rossellini

and Amidei succeed in completing their project. The film is a flop in Italy, but Geiger remains true to his word: *Open City* runs for twenty-one consecutive months in a New York theater to great critical and public acclaim, wins the Cannes Film Festival of 1946, is hailed as a masterpiece in Paris, earns worldwide admiration for Rossellini, and paves the way for the triumph of Italian neorealism.

If this account of the story behind the making of *Open City* reads like a film treatment, that's because it is. The history outlined above is drawn from Carlo Lizzani's *Celluloide*, a feature film released in 1995, starring Massimo Ghini as Roberto Rossellini, Giancarlo Giannini as scriptwriter Sergio Amidei, and Lina Sastri as Anna Magnani.[2] In telling the story of the birth of *Open City*, Lizzani offers the latest and most complete example of cinematic appropriations of Rossellini's film. Visconti had already done so in *Bellissima* (1951), in which Anna Magnani plays off of her earlier performance in *Open City* by reinventing Pina through the character of Maddalena, a working-class woman who dreams of stardom for her daughter but undergoes a profound moral conversion by the end of the film.[3] In a scene reminiscent of Pina's struggle to free herself from Nazi restraint and follow her fiancé, Francesco, when he is caught in a round-up of partisans, Maddalena breaks through the entourage surrounding Blasetti, lambasts the director for his callous treatment of her daughter, and subsequently sacrifices her petit bourgeois ambitions for the benefit of the little girl's well-being. *Open City*'s Pina stands as the measure of Maddalena's false consciousness throughout most of the film, and becomes the goal of the protagonist's conversion by the end of *Bellissima*. A similar, belated conversion awaits Mamma Roma, Magnani's character in Pasolini's 1962 film of the same name. Not only does the film's title alert us to Pasolini's appropriation of *Open City* (*Roma città aperta* in Italian), but so too does the camera's obsessive return to the skyline of one of Rome's postwar housing projects, presided over by a newly built church, whose garish dome parodies the Vatican cupola on the horizon of *Open City*'s final frames.[4] Symbol of Mamma Roma's vain hopes for social mobility, this skyline exposes the degradation of the utopian dream on which *Open City* concluded. Linking Don Pietro's martyrdom with that of his namesake through the image of the dome, Rossellini's final frames had suggested the refounding of postwar Italian society on the twin value systems for



6. Roberto Rossellini, played by Massimo Ghini, demonstrates the intimate relationship between the filmmaker and the raw materials of his art.

which the Marxist Manfredi and the partisan priest had just died. By including a skyline that both recalls and degrades the monumental one of *Open City's* conclusion, Pasolini implies that the social rebirth heralded by neorealist cinema was a stillbirth, that the longed-for refounding of Rome cannot take place in the fatuous and foundationless Italy of *Il Boom*.

In this history of allusions to *Open City* that serve as a measure of ideological disappointment and a critique of postwar Italy's failure to live up to the Resistance hopes for social renewal, the Roman episode of *Paisà* (1946) may be seen as self-appropriation on Rossellini's part. Cast as the prostitute Francesca in the 1946 film, Maria Michi recalls her performance as the showgirl Marina whose judgmental lover, Manfredi, refuses to forgive her waywardness and pushes her into the arms of Nazi authorities in *Open City*. The character played by Michi in *Paisà* has a similar temperament – at once corruptible, yet open to the redemptive influence of a good man. Like Manfredi in *Open City*, Fred in *Paisà* is too quick to condemn Francesca for depravity and therefore misses the chance to "save" her through love. In *Paisà*, Francesca embodies both sides of *Open City*'s Pina-Marina duality, insisting to Fred that she is not "just like all the rest [of the Roman women of easy virtue]." "There are lots of good, fine girls who work, who've been able to stave off hunger and poverty, working. She's one of those."[5] The fact that Fred refuses to keep the appointment with Francesca and forfeits his role in the redemption-of-the-prostitute scenario of conventional melodrama means that Rossellini himself has renounced the allegory of the "good" Italy personified by Pina and consecrated at the end of *Open City*. In the brief space of the year separating *Open City* from *Paisà*, the utopian dream had given way to the cynicism and despair expressed by Rossellini's 1946 variant of the feminized personification allegory so prevalent in the critical realist films of the postwar period in which highly sexualized female characters came to personify the Italian nation-state as a whole.[6]

Such disappointment finds satiric expression in Ettore Scola's *We All Loved Each Other So Much* (1974), where *Open City*'s Don Pietro is evoked in the casting of Aldo Fabrizi as the obese Romolo Catenacci, the corrupt building magnate who flaunts his ties to the Fascist past and the Christian-Democratic present. Furthermore, the name Romolo cannot help but recall *Open City*'s Romoletto, leader of the

child activists and figure of the new Romulus who will refound the war-ravaged city according to the ideals for which the film's Resistance heroes had just died. Introduced on screen in *We All Loved Each Other So Much* as the "new baby boy" emerging from his bath on the morning of his birthday, wearing only a towel around his enormous waist, the middle-aged Catenacci becomes the grotesque and perverse fulfillment of the promise for Italy's social rebirth in the aftermath of World War II. Nothing could be farther from the idealistic and altruistic figure of the partisan priest than this unsavory, self-aggrandizing tycoon who refuses to die and who bears a distinct resemblance to the roast pig wrapped in the tricolor flag that is greedily devoured on each of the several birthday celebrations that punctuate the film.

Open City is appropriated less for ideological than for psychoanalytic purposes by Bertolucci in *Last Tango in Paris* (1972). Among the fathers that Bertolucci must "kill off" in his Oedipal quest for selfhood is, of course, Rossellini. Recalling *Open City*, Bertolucci casts Maria Michi in the role of Paul's ineffectual mother-in-law, and Giovanna Galletti, who played the predatory Ingrid in Rossellini's 1945 film, as the superannuated whore. In a further nod to the origins of neorealism, Massimo Girotti, the male lead in *Ossessione* (1942), Visconti's film hailed as the movement's precursor, appears in the role of Rosa's lover. With these casting choices, Bertolucci invokes the once-glamorous actors of *Open City* and its predecessor film, only to show these performers now in the decrepitude of advancing age as a measure of neorealism's own waning powers of fascination.

It should come as no surprise that Maurizio Nichetti would include *Open City* in the chaotic potpourri of neorealist allusions that pervade *Icicle Thief* (1989). In the relationship between the boy, Bruno, and the parish priest, Don Italo, who mentors him, Nichetti replicates the Don Pietro-Marcello bond of *Open City*. In keeping with his postmodern agenda, however, Nichetti's revisitation of *Open City* is characterized by pastiche, that is, the borrowing of prior texts or aesthetic conventions in a way that is heedless of their original cultural content and empties them of their historicity. *Open City* is thus thrown into the helter-skelter mix of neorealist recalls in *Icicle Thief*, together with allusions to, of course, *Bicycle Thief*, but also to Visconti's *Ossessione*, De Sica's *Umberto D* (1951), and Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria* (1956)

that percolate through Nichetti's film and make of neorealism one vast inventory of references to be borrowed and recycled at will.

Lizzani's homage to *Open City*, on the other hand, opposes the reductive, leveling effects of pastiche by positing a "depth model" in the figure of the palimpsest, "a parchment on which the first writing has been scratched out in order to inscribe on it another, but where this operation has not irretrievably erased the earlier text, so that one can read the predecessor under the new, as if by transparency."[7] Lizzani announces his palimpsestual approach right from the very start of *Celluloide*. In its opening frames, actors primp in the make-up rooms of Cinecittà (Rome's vast film-studio complex) as they study photographs of the characters whose identities they are to portray (see Fig. 7). Lizzani then cuts to 1990s reenactments of the American liberation of Cinecittà, shot in color, alternating with documentary footage of the historical event. To complicate and multiply layers, Lizzani's newsreel clips in black and white become colorized, so that they stand midway between the original documentary images and the contemporary re-creation of the story that will comprise the rest of the film.

This embedding of discourses, this insistence on the thickness and "underneathness" of his film is mimetic. In layering his images, Lizzani is reflecting the palimpsestual nature of Rome itself, with its piling up of civilizations – from the ancient, to the paleo-Christian, to the medieval, to the Baroque, to the Fascist – one on top of another, regardless of their incongruities. In so doing, Lizzani's film participates in a long and venerable tradition of artifacts that "have as many layers as the eternal city," according to Keala Jewell, "and almost comprise a genre of their own."[8] Imitating the palimpsestual nature of his urban setting both as object of representation and as representational process, Lizzani's film creates a second-level archaeology – an archaeology of the celluloid image, which leads us back to prior visualizations of the history of Rome on film.

Cinecittà itself becomes a palimpsest in the credit sequence of *Celluloide* as Allied soldiers wander through the grounds of the studio complex to find among its props a mutilated statue of Julius Caesar. With this vestige of the historical superspectacle genre that prospered in the prewar industry, Lizzani portrays the apparatus of cinematic representations of Rome to be stratified and historically layered. In

7. Actress Lina Sastri contemplates her own mirror image next to photographs of Anna Magnani in the dressing room. (Cinecittà)

the ravages of the postwar landscape, the statue of Caesar now presides over the squalor of a displaced persons' camp, just as the Allied soldiers' liberation of Cinecittà, complete with the obligatory Hershey bars and jazz accompaniment, points ahead to the next layer of the Roman cinematic palimpsest in Rossellini's *Open City* and *Paisà*. *Open City* is bracketed by allusions to the ancient imperial tradition of the triumphal march: the film begins with the entrance of a brigade of Nazi soldiers into a Roman piazza, and it ends with the trek of the young boy activists along Via Trionfale back into the city that they will "conquer" for a future of social justice and spiritual rebirth.

By insisting on an external referent to which his film invariably points, Lizzani is, of course, recapitulating Rossellini's own achievement in *Open City*. Again and again, *Celluloide* tells us that what made *Open City* such a groundbreaking and risky operation was its courage *to refer*, to record the very events that Romans had just experienced during the Nazi occupation. "You want to innovate," responds Peppino Amato when approached to finance the production. "A film of cold, hard facts, no *optimistic* sentimentality. If you want to risk,

risk. But count me out." The romantic Countess Politi, more open to Rossellini's seductive sales pitch, nonetheless responds "We'll be frightened all over again" when informed of the recentness and rawness of the historical events that the film will chronicle. The film's working title, *Storie d'ieri* (*Stories of Yesterday*), makes explicit the immediacy of the history that Rossellini dares to recount. But it is just this documentary impulse that constitutes the "modernity" of *Open City* in the eyes of its makers, distinguishing it from the consolatory, escapist offerings of mainstream cinema. "I'm preparing a film about Rome under Nazi occupation," Rossellini explains to two potential supporters. "Amato wants to forget the past. He wants the usual – he flattens, he sweetens. He's not modern."

The modernity of Rossellini, then, is his opposition to the cinema's habitual forgetfulness, his resistance to its flattening and edulcorating operations. In addressing the actor Aldo Fabrizi's hesitations about leaving the vaudeville stage and accepting the tragic role of Don Pietro, the scriptwriter Amidei reiterates the revolutionary aspect of a cinema of historical witness. "People have cried too much," Fabrizi objected. "I don't see myself in a dramatic role." "Courage is trying new things," Amidei replied. What the actor is invited to do on the level of individual performance reflects, in miniature, what the cinema itself is attempting to do in the broadest, generic terms – abandon the escapist comedies and sentimental melodramas of the Fascist period and testify to the convulsive history of the recent past. When Peppino Amato is lured back into financing *Open City* on the condition that its tears be alleviated by intermittent laughter and gags, it is the mathematics of death that definitively drives him away. The insistence that three of its main characters die is more tragedy than the producer can accept, and when he tries to bargain the authors down one death (sparing the priest), Amidei will not tolerate this assault on their film's "modernity."

Open City's documentary impulse is not limited to body counts and the general contours of Roman suffering under the Nazis. Personalities and anecdotes are drawn from the historical record: Don Pietro is a composite of two partisan priests, Don Pappagallo, who conspired to save Jews and Communists from the Gestapo, and Don Morosini, who was executed for his Resistance activities. Manfredi combines the attributes of Celeste Negarville and Giorgio Amendola,

both antifascist organizers who had frequented the household of Amidei. Pina's death is based on the tragedy of Teresa Gullace, a pregnant woman who was machine-gunned by the Nazis as she ran after her husband, captured during a partisan round-up. Manfredi's rooftop flight at the start of *Open City* reenacts Amidei's real-life escape from a Gestapo sting operation against leaders of the Roman underground.

It is with the scriptwriter's own experience of Nazi persecution that Lizzani's film begins, creating a five-tiered structure of narration. As Amidei types his text on the screen – "There was a full moon that night . . ." – words fade away and images take their place in a black-and-white enactment of the episode. These visualized words, followed by their imagistic counterparts, comprise the first two levels of representation. A third layer is added in the film's narrative present when Amidei guides Rossellini through the incident on the very rooftop where it had occurred. At a fourth remove from the actual event, Rossellini "rewrites" the scene in conversation with Amidei, both tightening and purging it of clichés: no dark-cloaked Gestapo agents (too redolent of spy movies), no full moon, no pittosporum bush. Rossellini's revised version is then represented on screen in black and white, adding a fifth and final stratum to the palimpsest.

Lizzani again uses a complex technique of layering in the scene that marks Rossellini's decision to cast Magnani for the female lead of *Open City*. Set in a working-class housing project where Rossellini and Amidei interview residents about the killing of Teresa Gullace, the scene switches to black and white to simulate Rossellini's own reconstruction of the incident as he listens to eye-witness accounts. Cross-cutting between then and now, Lizzani blurs the boundary lines between narrative layers by having Rossellini and Amidei "enter" the black-and-white reconstruction to behold the crowd forming outside the building where the round-up occurs. For a fleeting moment, Rossellini catches a glimpse of Anna Magnani, dressed as Pina, in the crowd, and with this apparition, any residual doubts about the casting choice are dispelled. Through the technique of palimpsest, Lizzani has found a formula for rendering Rossellini's creative process as the neorealist filmmaker "discovers" his actress embedded in the innermost layers of his imagined historical reconstruction.

Perhaps the boldest authorial decision on Lizzani's part, and the one that most absolves him of any charges of postmodern simulation, is the strategy of editing into *Celluloide* brief clips from *Open City* itself. Lizzani does this seven times during the course of his film, but the flashes are so brief as to allow for no nostalgic lingering, no bitter reflection on the impossibility of ever recapturing the authenticity of the original. Such flashes serve, instead, to verify the film's quest on the level of documentary evidence to prove that there is indeed a referent to which *Celluloide* points. These clips from the original film serve as the gold standard that guarantees the linguistic coinage of Lizzani's work, the external referent that exempts the film from the infinite play of signifiers of postmodern citation. Walter Benjamin's lament for the loss of "aura" in the age of mechanical reproduction finds its rebuttal in *Celluloide*, which exploits the mechanical reproducibility of film to recapture the authenticity of the Rossellinian source. Thanks to *celluloid*, the material basis of the medium that permits cutting, splicing, and all the operations of montage, Lizzani is physically able to incorporate *Open City* into his filmic reconstruction.

In poststructuralist terms, what I am saying is entirely heretical, and I can already anticipate some readers' objections. It could be argued that *Celluloide*'s referent is *itself* a text, a signifier meaningful only in relation to its place on the chain of other filmic signs. But I would refute this position on the basis of the film's reception, as I discovered doing my "fieldwork" in Rome during the summer of 1996. From interviewing Lizzani and reading the "text" of the urban landscape, I learned that *Open City* has come to transcend its status as a filmic representation of Liberation history, and has come to be equated with that history itself in the collective imaginary.[9] During conversations with Lizzani, I was surprised to hear him condemn the contemporary practice of meta-cinema, of films about filmmaking, until I realized that *Open City* had become for the director a primary datum, an "extramural" fact on the order of a workers' strike, a military campaign, or a parliamentary election. As cultural icon, the film had come to stand, by synecdoche, for its historical moment – it functioned as the part for the whole, the detail whose mere invocation was enough to conjure up an entire era. To make a film about the making of *Open City*, therefore, was not to indulge in

postmodern self-reference, but to engage in a philological reconstruction whose closest equivalent in literature would be the historical novel.

Another of my experiences "in the field" enabled me to generalize on what I learned from the interview with Lizzani. On the fifty-second anniversary of the Allied Liberation of Rome, the city was plastered with posters, sponsored by the Rifondazione Comunista – a spin-off of the now-defunct Partito Comunista Italiano – publicizing the Festival of Liberation to be held that summer. The poster was entitled "Roma Città Aperta [and taking advantage of the postpositioned adjective, it continued] al lavoro, alla partecipazione, alla speranza" (Rome, city open to work, to participation, to hope), and it featured what I am convinced is a photo-portrait of Anna Magnani delivering a public address (see Fig. 8). The poster equates Rossellini's film with historical memory: it is the mediating term between the 1944 Liberation of Rome and the appeal for its contemporary renewal. By using *Open City* as a rallying cry and a call to arms in 1996, the poster testifies to the perceived equivalence of the historical event and its neorealist representation. It is this convergence of film history and national chronicle that makes *Open City* the first-level writing of Lizzani's palimpsest, the stable object at the bottom of his archaeological dig.

A film about the birth of *Open City* is also, by necessity, a film about the birth of neorealism, and Lizzani, as the quintessential historian of Italian cinema, has made *Celluloide* a rich repository of explanations for how the celebrated postwar film aesthetic took shape.[10] *Celluloide* therefore reads back into the story behind *Open City* many of the attributes that scholars have since identified as the defining characteristics of neorealist filmmaking. In other words, the film brings to life the critical analyses of neorealism, making them the stuff of drama. Neorealistic practice is thus emplotted along a series of points marked by conflicts arising between Rossellini and producers, actors, technicians, and, of course, the screenwriter Sergio Amidei. Lizzani ascribes the miracle of the film's birth to the intense, stormy, yet complementary relationship between these two men as they wrestle with their own personal demons, the daunting external obstacles to the realization of their project, and the intricacies of their collaborative process.

Most importantly, *Open City* serves as a form of expiation for a cinematic past of which neither the director nor the scriptwriter is proud. Rossellini is haunted by his three previous films, often referred to as his fascist trilogy – *La nave bianca* (1941), *Un pilota ritorna* (1942), and *L'uomo della croce* (1943) – the first of which is mentioned admiringly in *Celluloide* by a former naval officer and potential producer of *Open City*, whereas the last title is thrown in his face during an argument with Amidei. But Amidei has his own past to live down in the romantic comedies, or "fluff" movies, that he had scripted before the war. Significantly, both men bring their past experiences with problematic genres to the writing of *Open City* as a way of atoning for their earlier sins by inaugurating a new cinema of social conscience. Thus Amidei defends the comedic genre as perfectly adequate to the truth claims of World War II history, whereas Rossellini insists on the necessity of documentary seriousness in the realization of their project. What emerges is a willingness to compromise on both men's parts in the forging of that generic hybridity that will become the hallmark of neorealism. "According to you," Amidei tells Rossellini, "truth and seriousness are the same thing. But liars can be very serious." "You want to make a comedy," Rossellini replies with barely concealed contempt. "A comedy, with a dramatic component," Amidei proposes, "but not dismally so."

Coming from the documentary tradition of Francesco De Robertis and the recent experience of the fascist trilogy, Rossellini had been quick to associate comedy with the escapist fare of "white telephone" films and to see only serious genres as capable of historical witness. But Rossellini immediately signals a willingness to relent in the next exchange in *Celluloide*, when Amidei recounts his rooftop flight from Nazi pursuers and his subsequent fear of distributing the antifascist literature in his keeping. "We don't have to make a film about heroes," Rossellini reassures him, in a formulation whose casualness belies the revolutionary importance of this thought. In so saying, Rossellini lays the groundwork of neorealism by forfeiting the apparatus of heroism, with all of its rhetorical grandiosity, its celebration of the extraordinary, and its denial of historical agency to the common folk. Rossellini further relaxes his insistence on high seriousness and heroics when he agrees to include Fellini in his scriptwriting team. Hired because of his contacts with Aldo Fabrizi, Fellini

8. During the summer of 1996 in Rome, the Festa di liberazione (Liberation Festival) was advertised by a poster that used the title of Rossellini's film as a call for contemporary political renewal.

convinces Rossellini that truth is not the exclusive province of documentary, indeed that "a comic actor is always true." Swayed by Fellini's argument, Rossellini agrees to incorporate into the script of *Open City* a number of gags penned by the young writer from Rimini. So extreme is Rossellini's generic about-face that now Amidei feels compelled to vindicate the seriousness of the project. "How many *padellate* [paddlings with a frying pan] did you put into the film?" asks an infuriated Amidei on the stairs leading away from Peppino Amato's palatial apartment. By the end of the filming, however, the

testimonial seriousness of the project has gained priority over any concerns for its marketability. When Amato finds the film's ratio of laughter to tears to be unacceptably low, Rossellini refuses to alter the generic calculus. Similarly appalled by the film's overtly political agenda, the distributor Mosco demands the elimination of the film's offending scenes – those involving torture, narcotics, and homosexual seductions – and their replacement by more cheerful fare. Though Rossellini is stung by the prospect of his failure to find a distributor for the film, he joins Amidei in defending the integrity of their work.

In generic terms, neorealism's hybridity amounts to a frontal assault on convention. "And it is not only the syntax [of the narrative structure] that is overturned, but the entire system of genres within which the cinema came to be habitually constructed and ordered," Lizzani explains. "The tragic alternates with the grotesque, drama with comedy, farce, and melodrama. It is a question of sudden and violent lane-switchings that cause confusion or strange confluences and always new, stimulating hybridizations that disconcert the public or engage it in a new way with respect to the past (new consensuses, but also new disagreements, ruptures of complicity, lapses of identification)."[11]

Built into *Celluloide* are internalized examples of the audience responses that neorealism was designed to elicit, and those responses are seen to affect incrementally the very process by which *Open City* was conceived and carried out. The film's power to frighten, sadden, outrage, offend, and astonish are all dramatized during the course of *Open City*'s preparation. From the Countess Politi's comment that the chronicle of *fatti accaduti* (real-life occurrences) will renew everyone's anxieties, to Fabrizi's tearful reading of the script, to Magnani's sadness about playing *una donnetta* "who dies a death greater than she is," to the distributor's censure of the film's impropriety, to Rod Geiger's amazement at the spectacle of its making, to Amidei's advice that the reluctant Communist extra play a Nazi so hateful that the audience will flock to the Communist Party. *Celluloide* surveys the intensity and diversity of reactions provoked by *Open City*, even before its public release. It is as if the reactions elicited by the film throughout its various phases of elaboration were themselves incorporated

into the very fabric of *Open City*, making it dialogic in Bakhtin's sense of the term. The reception of the film-in-progress can thus be seen as having a formative influence on its evolution, providing the motor force for Rossellini and Amidei to persevere against all odds in the realization of their dream.

Crucial to this dialogic process was the reaction of Rossellini's troupe to the emerging cinematic experiment. The director's dedication to his idea was contagious, and when that idea was in jeopardy, Magnani or the cinematographer, Ubaldo Arata, were there to defend it. On the verge of yielding to Amato's choice of the diva Clara Calamai for Pina, Rossellini is reminded by Magnani that he is a director "with special ideas," whose commitment to populist authenticity would be sorely compromised by the casting of a star as the female lead. Defending the dark and gritty photography of *Open City* before the onslaughts of Peppino Amato, Arata explains that "a film shouldn't be an illustrated postcard. The photography must fit the story we're telling."

The primacy accorded to the *idea* in Rossellini's aesthetics, the insistence that the concept of the film preexists, and gives rise to, its formal values, is nowhere more evident than in a critical exchange between writer and director on the subject of *Open City's* final frames. "It's too static, too still" Rossellini complains. "We need another idea." "No, we need another image" Amidei counters. "If the idea works and the image doesn't, it means the idea doesn't work," Rossellini concludes. With this lesson in mind, Amidei is able to rewrite the final frames using imagery that reflects a considerably revised approach to narrative closure. Once Amidei decides that the final message must be dynamic and hopeful, rather than mournful and resigned, he can conjure up images that satisfy Rossellini's requirements. Rather than linger on the boys' downcast expressions in the wake of Don Pietro's execution, Amidei has the camera focus on them as they turn away from the spectacle of death and go forward in the direction of the city, dominated by the dome of San Pietro, and hence toward a future of political hope and spiritual rebirth.

Now we are prepared to consider the question that hovers over the pages of this study: why the reverential return to neorealism, and specifically to *Open City*, in the mid-1990s? Remarks by Lizzani in the

1996 interview mentioned above suggest that *Celluloide* was made as a reaction against the contemporary film scene, mired in "mannerism, meta-cinema, cinema on cinema. . . . parodistic, mannerist."[12] The anemia of today's filmmakers is, of course, a function of their social context, which relegates subjects to the position of passive consumers, denying them the prerogatives of primary experience, of assuming the role of protagonists in the historical process. By telling the story behind *Open City*, Lizzani is reevoking a time when historical agency was deemed possible, and when films had the power not only to represent but to promote that possibility. Thus *Celluloide* is not just about *Open City*, Lizzani explains, but about the "pioneering spirit of the human adventure. . . . featuring courage, winning characters, as opposed to today's cinema which is about losers, desperation, anger" (see Fig. 9).

Most important, the "pioneering spirit of human adventure" that marked the birth of *Open City* was also the spirit that launched the rebirth of the nation in the wake of fascism and war. Given Lizzani's insistence on the vital link between filmmaking and nation building in the Italy of 1945, I propose that *Celluloide* be considered an exercise in secondary mythmaking, "a founding story by a civilization already founded and already sophisticated" in Frank McConnell's terminology.[13] Like Virgil's *Aeneid*, which recounted the origins of the Roman Empire in a way that justified the political agenda of Augustus, Lizzani's film looks back to the birth of the postwar Italian state and its cinematic vehicle as a plea for their contemporary renewal. By reproposing neorealism for the 1990s, Lizzani is not arguing for a return to the subsistence world of 1945, or to a practice of primitive, documentary filmmaking, but to a time when cinema was the medium of national reference, when a film could be equated with a foundational historical event. "Forse ci tornerà la paura" ("Maybe our fear will return"), the countess had said upon hearing the subject matter that Rossellini had in mind for *Open City*. "E' anche un poco di orgoglio" ("And also a modicum of pride"), adds one of Rossellini's newly won supporters. That *poco d'orgoglio* made *Open City* the inaugural chapter in a cinema of national rebirth, creating a filmographic memory that will not go away and that serves as the first layer of the infinitely renewable palimpsest of Italian cinematic realism.

9. Carlo Lizzani (left) directs Giancarlo Giannini (seated at the desk) in the role of Sergio Amidei, flanked by the characters of Ione, Rossellini's script girl, and Harry Feist, *Open City*'s Bergmann.

NOTES

1. Parts of the essay appeared in "Palimpsest Versus Pastiche: Revisiting Neorealism in the 1990s," *Annali d'Italianistica*, ed. Gaetana Marrone, 17 (1999), pp. 56–68.
2. *Celluloide* (1995). Directed by Carlo Lizzani. Screenplay by Ugo Pirro, Furio Scarpelli, and Carlo Lizzani. Sets and costumes by Luciano Sagoni. Photography by Giorgio Di Battista. Music by Manuel De Sica. Edited by Alberto Gallitti. Cast: Massimo Ghini (as Roberto Rossellini); Giancarlo Giannini (as Sergio Amidei); Lina Sastri (as Anna Magnani); Antonello Fassani (as Aldo Fabrizi); Anna Falchi (as Maria Michi). The film is based largely on Ugo Pirro, *Celluloide* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1983). Pirro's recollections are dramatic and fascinating, but, according to some critics, not always reliable. Tag Gallagher, for example, cites Pirro regularly in his long chapter on *Open City*, but also calls attention to a variety of places where Pirro's version of the making of the film is deficient or inaccurate; see *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*: *His Life and Films* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), esp. pp. 115–79, and the notes for his chapter, pp. 718–23.
3. This is Gaia Servadio's excellent insight. See *Luchino Visconti: A Biography* (New York: Franklin Watts, 1983), p. 131.
4. For this observation, and further elaboration on Pasolini's recourse to *Open City*, see Maurizio Viano's chapter on *Mamma Roma* in *A Certain Realism:*

Making Use of Pasolini's Film Theory and Practice (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), pp. 87–88.

5. Roberto Rossellini, *The War Trilogy*: *Open City, Paisan, Germany Year Zero*, trans. Judith Green (New York: Grossman, 1973), p. 247.
6. For an extended treatment of this topos, see Millicent Marcus, "The Italian Body Politic Is a Woman: Feminized National Identity in Postwar Italian Film," In *Sparks and Seeds: Medieval Literature and its Afterlife: Essays in Honor of John Freccero*, ed. Dana E. Stewart and Alison Cornish (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2000), pp. 329–47.
7. Gérard Genette, *Palimpsestes* (Paris: Seuil, 1982). This is my translation of the blurb on the back cover of the text.
8. Keala Jewell, *The Poeisis of History* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 25.
9. Lizzani graciously accorded me this interview in Rome's Piazza del Popolo on July 2, 1996, at Rosati, favorite cafe and meeting place of film people over the years.
10. Lizzani's extensive and important writings about Italian film history include, among others, *Il cinema italiano: Dalle origini agli anni ottanata*, originally published in 1979 and now in its third edition, (Rome: Riuniti, 1992); *Storia del cinema italiano* (Florence: Parenti, 1961); and *Attraverso il novecento* (Rome: Scuola Nazionale di Cinema, 1998).
11. Carlo Lizzani, "*Roma città aperta*: Una revisione critica?," in *Roma città aperta*, ed. Adriano Aprà (Rome: Assessorato alla cultura, Agenzia "Roma Città di Cinema," 1998), p. 148.
12. Lizzani, personal interview, July 2, 1996.
13. Frank McConnell, *Storytelling and Mythmaking: Images from Film and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 75.

MARCIA LANDY

4 Diverting Clichés

Femininity, Masculinity, Melodrama, and Neorealism in *Open City*

Although there is scholarly unanimity about the imprint of neorealism on Italian postwar cinema and on the European cinema of the 1960s and 1970s, there continues to be disagreement about its treatment of the Fascist past, its politics and style, and its relation to neorealism. In this essay, I examine *Open City* as a test case for rethinking the premises of neorealism through examining its emphasis on and treatment of cliché, particularly in relation to representations of gender and sexuality. Usually regarded as a mode of habitual recognition and as common sense, clichés in *Open City* are detached from their context and, in their now-ambiguous status, have the potential to produce attentive recognition and thought through invoking new associations and new ways of seeing. The image becomes "mental" or "philosophical" rather than action oriented, thus violating conventional modes of perception.

As I adopt the term *cliché*, I understand it to be more than, even to subsume, the operation of cinematic and literary genres and their narrative conventions. Clichés are tied to habitual perception and to the secure parameters of the predictable world. They function more broadly as an automatic response to events, providing in sound and visual images a sense of commonly shared beliefs in the world. The cliché affirms a belief in the power of common sense with its adherence to inherited versions of the real, for:

> [W]e do not perceive the thing or the image in its entirety, we always perceive less of it, we perceive only what we are interested

> in perceiving, or rather what it is in our interest to perceive, by virtue of our economic interests, ideological beliefs, and psychological demands. We therefore normally perceive only clichés. But if our sensory-motor schemata jam or break, then a different kind of image can appear; a pure optical-sound image, the whole image without metaphor brings out the thing in itself, literally, in its excess of horror or beauty.[1]

Open City is a labyrinth of clichés. Foremost among these clichés is the presentation of a narrative "plot" that dramatizes the struggle against the conspiratorial powers of Nazism and Fascism. The existence of such a conspiracy as an "organisation of Power, was to take on a new aspect in the modern world, that the cinema would endeavor to follow and show."[2] In its investigation of the criminal acts of the Fascists and Nazis, *Open City* draws on melodramatic clichés in relation to its construction of character and plot, uses of *mise-en-scène*, and dialogue. These clichés involve representations of femininity and masculinity in the context of perverse sexuality, deception, and misrepresentation in probing questions of belief, responsibility, and judgment. The film also draws on clichés regarding the Church, Communism, the Italian Resistance, and Nazism.

Regarded from a conventional view of melodrama, *Open City* does not seem so radical a departure from the late films of the Fascist era, and critics in various ways have begun to acknowledge its relationship to those films. Critical discussion of the film ranges from historical analysis of the film's position within the "canon" of neorealism to more contentious examinations of the film's mixed style. The film's uses of melodrama were not new. Peter Bondanella has suggested that *Open City* should be regarded in the context of the Fascist era "in which Rossellini received his training,"[3] rather than as an abrupt departure in style and perhaps also in politics. Accounting for the controversial critical status of *Open City* as neorealist text, David Forgacs has commented that the film is "a hybrid, in which cinematic convention is grafted onto dramatic convention . . . where photographic documentation and historical testimony coexist with a mythical reconstruction of the past."[4]

The film has traits in common with a number of films produced in the last years of the Fascist regime. These films (beyond the usually

cited Visconti film *Ossessione* [*Obsession*, 1943] and Alessandro Blasetti's *Quattro passi fra le nuvole* [*A Walk among the Clouds*, 1942]) employed melodrama in ways that appeared to offer an oblique critique of the Italian Fascist regime. In addition, other films directed by Mario Camerini (*Il cappello da prete* [*The Priest's Hat*, 1944], Renato Castellani (*Un colpo di pistola* [*A Pistol Shot*, 1942]), and Ferdinando Maria Poggioli (*La morte civile* [*Civil Death*, 1942] and *Gelosia* [*Jealousy*, 1943]) focused on images of a moribund society. This cinema portrayed images of disintegrating masculinity and focused particularly on the role of women and children as reflectors and victims of this decadent world.[5]

Although the films did not portray poverty and unemployment, their florid, often noir-like, styles and their focus on theatricality had the effect of undermining a seamless escapist portrait of social life. The characters are portraits of obsession. Their affect is transformed into aggression, and the milieu is presented as a world of violence set in motion by the male characters. The female characters are often obsessed and somnambulistic, more acted upon than acting, becoming filters through which the spectator can perceive this disintegrating world.

My object in stressing stylistic affinities between the cinema under Fascism and *Open City* is to account better for the film's apparently "hybrid" style. Critics have commented on the film's hovering between classic cinematic "realism" and a new regime of the image.[6] *Open City*'s "mixing" of styles is not a weakness in execution or a lapse into mere escapism or forgetting, as some have claimed, but a significant mode of departure from hitherto prevailing forms of filmmaking associated with Hollywood and with the commercial Italian cinema of the Fascist era. In this context, *Open City* is a document of remembering cinema rather than of forgetting it. However its memory is of a previous cinema and its recognition of a "plot," or melodramatic conspiracy, is related to forms of cinema that sought to reanimate moribund images of the world. In fact, a close examination reveals that the film is more of a complex stylistic collage than a simple linear narrative.

Briefly, the events portrayed in *Open City* are as follows: In the midst of wartime, Pina, a working-class woman, played by Anna Magnani, anticipates her wedding to Francesco (Francesco Granjacquet), a

partisan. Following a raid by the Nazis, Francesco is taken away by the enemy. Pina runs after him and is shot dead on the street. A priest, Don Pietro (Aldo Fabrizi), acting as intermediary for the Resistance, is caught and brought before the Gestapo along with an Austrian deserter he has tried to protect and Manfredi (Marcello Pagliero), a Communist leader of the Resistance. The men are betrayed by Marina (Maria Michi), Manfredi's former mistress, through the maneuvers of a Nazi woman, Ingrid (Giovanna Galletti). These two women are the carriers of the melodramatic motifs of jealousy, revenge, and treachery. Manfredi is tortured and the priest shot by the Germans. In their refusal to betray their beliefs, the two die as martyrs.

The bare outline of these events suggests conventional melodrama; however, an examination of the film's elliptical structure reveals stylistic processes at work that complicate and undermine melodramatic formulas and conventions. The film's iconoclasm that manifests itself as a shattering of cliché by means of cliché is tied to issues of femininity and masculinity. Nowhere is the dilemma of the cinematic heritage of clichéd images more evident than in the film's treatment of women. In his discussion of the film, Peter Brunette asserts that "the chief sufferers, of course, are the women." And the chief sufferer is Pina, though Marina is finally not exempt from anguish. Brunette further informs us that the film employs a traditional dichotomy. The men act, the women are acted upon: "Pina is killed when she takes action, to be sure, but, again, her action is motivated by natural 'womanly instinct' in defense of her man."[7]

This interpretation makes several assumptions that I believe run counter to the film's treatment of Pina. First of all, it assumes that Pina's character is to be interpreted on the level of conventional narrative analysis. It also assumes that the film uncritically endorses a prevailing stereotype of woman, namely as passive and subordinated victim. It further reduces her behavior to a binary analysis of gender roles. As I read the film in terms of its investment in and orchestration of cliché, Pina's motivation as a character is less important than her position as linchpin and guide to the unresolved and submerged issues posed by this cinematic world. As with most representations of woman, her presence is a sign of trouble in the text that must be sought elsewhere than in conventional narrative analysis.

How then can one view her character in this film? Is she another maternal cliché identified with the nation? Is she a hysterical image of femininity? Is she a throwback to earlier cinematic images in Italian cinema? Is she, to quote Jean-Luc Godard, a "just image" or "only just an image"? Pina can be compared to the male protagonists in that, like them, she is incapable of altering the events: she can only respond to them. Strictly speaking, she is not a narrative agent. Not only Pina, but all of the characters are incapable of actively altering the events. This lack of agency is a sign that the film has entered into a regime where "the image no longer refers to a situation . . . which is dispersive . . . [and where] the characters are multiple, with weak inferences and become principal or revert to being secondary."[8]

Pina's death represents one of the enigmas of the film, where a character that appears to be primary reverts to being secondary. How can the manner of her disappearance from the text (early in the film) be explained in terms of cinematic practice? Is her death, like the theft of Antonio's bicycle in *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio De Sica, 1948) a pretext for melodramatic effect, for the director's act of banishing her conveniently from the text so as to address unencumbered the plight of the male characters who also undergo a transformation from their position in the classical cinema of action? Or should we understand Pina's death differently? According to David Forgacs:

> It is not actually clear why Pina runs after the truck carrying Francesco away. One might be tempted to interpret her action as one of desperation or folly, but this would suggest that she knows the risk she is taking, in other words that she can anticipate the violent reaction by the enemy. Yet the reaction (the shooting) has to appear outrageous in comparison with the action (Pina's running with hand raised, shouting her fiancé's name) . . . Whatever her motive may be, then, her act is associated with her courage and her refusal to bow to the arrogance of power.[9]

Forgacs exposes the difficulty of accounting for Pina's demise in terms of narrative motivation. I regard her removal from the film as a prime instance of the film's tampering with classic realism and its penchant for the efficacy of action, resolution, and insistence on transcendental meaning. Following the strategies of the neorealist aesthetic,

Pina's death introduces complexity and indeterminacy into the narrative. It cannot be easily interpreted. It remains, as it should remain, a gesture that must be questioned in a film that resists the triteness of common sense.

The film adheres to the cliché of the brutal and unnecessary death of a woman as symbolic of the fallen nation, but in the shocking and premature mode of her demise, the film calls attention to the ubiquity and power of this clichéd image. Pina's body, like that of the martyred priest and Communist, can be regarded as another clichéd instance of the humiliation and degradation of Rome (and by extension, Italy) at the hands of the Nazis. The image of woman as the innocent victim of war at the hands of a barbaric enemy is often a narrative cliché used often to justify acts of rage and revenge. This mode of interpretation lends credibility to the notion that the film is an exercise in redeeming the Italian nation and that Pina is a narrative instrument in this transformation. However, a close examination of subsequent events in the film reveals ambiguity about her place in the text or, more spectacularly, its absence. The viewer confronts an array of possible interpretations in seeking to account for Pina's abrupt and disturbing departure from the narrative. In explanatory fashion, her death can be understood as another striking instance of the waste of life characteristic of fascism and war, but in terms of the trajectory of the film, why is her murder necessary? Would her survival have mitigated the melodramatic affect that the film seeks to question?

A modification of the cliché of suffering femininity becomes evident when the fallen Pina now assumes the position of a Christ figure and the priest that of a maternal figure. When Don Pietro runs to her and takes her in his arms in a pietà-like gesture, the maternal and creative body is transferred from Pina to Don Pietro as he cradles her lifeless body (see Fig. 10). I suggest, therefore, that if Anna Magnani's image in *Open City* is an incarnation of the potentially redeemable body of a mutilated nation, it is a cliché. It is also an image uprooted from conventional narration and assigned an indeterminate position in the text. Instead of aligning with the character and gaining information conducive to resolution of conflict, the spectator confronts a world where recognizable elements of landscape and behavior become ambiguous.

10. Don Pietro cradles Pina in a pietà-like gesture. (BFI Films: Stills, Posters and Designs)

The character of Pina serves as a tenuous figure in the dramatization of the uncertain hopes of the film and its investigation of the brutality of war and fascism. Her character, while animated by the film's struggle to create belief in the possibility of a new and different sense of the future, is cast differently, more ambiguously and uncertainly, from the narrative, formulaic, affective, and illusionist forms of Hollywood filmmaking and of commercial films under Fascism. *Open City* abandons her technically as far as the narrative is concerned, but not conceptually.

Specifically in relation to cinematic clichés involving stardom, Magnani's ample body, disheveled look, husky voice, and passionate acting are indicative of a departure from prevailing conceptions of femininity. Her character in the film can be identified with her working-class origins and her "fallen condition" as "unwed mother."[10] ("I've lived badly," she confesses to Don Pietro.) Her unkempt appearance, "her status as a *popolana* whose identity is very much bound up with her community," and her "colloquial language"

have also been noted by critics.[11] Clearly, she does not belong with the female protagonists of the previous era in Italian cinema, though she had appeared in films such as *Teresa Venerdi* (directed by Vittorio De Sica, 1941) and *Campo de' fiori* (with Aldo Fabrizi; directed by Mario Bonnard, 1943).

Whereas the other female characters in the film (Marina and Ingrid) are remnants of the genre cinema under Fascism, Pina offers a different cinematic version of femininity that comes to be identified with the emergent Magnani star persona. Magnani embodies a conception of femininity that is decentered from existing forms of representation, though it should be noted that this type is nonetheless theatrical and melodramatic, and has the seeds of another cliché in the making. Her image reveals new clichés that representation and performance were to produce after neorealism and perhaps because of it. However, her superb mastery of roles relies on the illusion of authenticity: that her image on the screen is "an ontological identity between the actress and the role she is playing."[12] The film's tampering with cliché can be profitably viewed in relation to prior conceptions and representations of women in the Fascist era. It can further be construed as introducing fundamental questions about gender in relation to conceptions of masculinity that are ultimately tied to the film's treatment of Manfredi and Don Pietro.

A comparison with representations of women under Fascism is particularly revealing of *Open City*'s destabilizing of cliché. With the rise of Fascism and the advent of the sound cinema, documentaries by LUCE (L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa) and commercial feature films were increasingly devoted to the project of returning women to the domestic sphere and to their "primary" role as mothers. As Victoria de Grazia describes in *How Fascism Ruled Women*, government campaigns were waged to enhance the birth rate as well as to promote the primacy of the family presumed to be under siege.[13] The valorization of motherhood corresponded with the attack on feminist aspirations. Toward the ends of making motherhood attractive and profitable, the regime offered honorific titles and monetary incentives. A number of films beginning in the silent era in Italy offered a repertoire of maternal figures and maternal surrogates. These would multiply during the *Ventennio*, the years of Fascist rule.

Narratives featuring an unwed mother typically doomed her for a time to wandering with her child, subject to social ostracism and often driven to crime and prostitution until redeemed or destroyed.[14] Usually a figure of self-sacrifice, the mother renounces her own desires in behalf of her offspring. The maternal figure is either a paragon of self-abnegation or errant and destructive. Pina's role is expressive, I believe, of *Open City*'s wrestling with, not resolving, these cinematic clichés of maternal femininity. Her relationship to her young son, Marcello (Vito Annicchiarico), conforms to images of maternal behavior. In her concern for his welfare, she is gruff; she boxes his ears for associating with Romoletto and is deaf to the boy's politics. Her attachment to and admiration for Francesco seems also to be maternal in her devotion and service to him as exemplified in her ineffectual and fatal attempt to save him from the Nazis.

Pina's romanticism is evident in her early conversation with Manfredi, when, learning of his uneasy relationship to Marina, she says, "Love can change a woman." These clichéd images and responses invoke and also supplant the clichés of the omniscient and selfless mother figure found in films of the Fascist era. Thus, though she may seem to bear cinematic affinity to portraits of the mother in earlier Italian cinema and particularly of maternal images in the Fascist years, the film's treatment of her diverts the spectator's attention onto a different set of issues specifically involving connections between character and Roman milieu.

In focusing on the crucial connections in *Open City* between character and landscape, Millicent Marcus notes that "the protagonist of the story is Rome itself, as a place, as a people, and as a historical entity."[15] Marcus comments on the presence of maps of Rome in Major Bergmann's office and in Francesco's room that introduce conflicting and clichéd images of the city. The film begins and ends with images of the "violated" city. The opening shows Nazis marching through the streets on their way to find and arrest Manfredi. Throughout the film, as David Forgacs has elegantly argued, the spectator is given two views of Rome, a vertical and controlling one identified with the Nazis and a decentralized one identified with the beleaguered populace.[16] At the end of the film, Don Pietro's death in a barren field against images of the city in the background also

dramatizes the immolation of Rome. Thus, he, like Pina, is also a maternal figure, identified with the suffering body of the city.

In *Mamma Roma* (1962), Pier Paolo Pasolini carried this image of an identification of Rome with the maternal figure into a new and more critical register. In this film, Magnani, playing the mother, is now portrayed as a prostitute. Maurizio Viano observes that "Pasolini makes a rather harsh commentary on the idealism with which *Roma città aperta* had portrayed the lower classes as basically immune from greed."[17] *Mamma Roma* challenges the neorealism of *Open City*, regarding it as incapable of treating the lower classes with complexity. Pasolini's film is unconcerned with a conventional reading of cinema narrative: its subject is cinematic representation. Rossellini's film too is not devoid of this reflexivity, particularly evident in the female characters.

If Anna Magnani's image in *Open City* is an incarnation of the potentially redeemable body of a mutilated nation, it is a traditional image uprooted from its conventional context, and as such, exposed as a cliché. She serves as a familiar but tenuous figure in the dramatization of the uncertain hopes of the film and its identification with resistance against the brutality of war and fascism. Her character is animated by the film's struggle to create belief in the possibility of a new and different future, but the particular dimensions of that future are not spelled out and, characteristic of the neorealist aesthetic, remain uncertain.

The focus of *Open City* seems to be on the legacy and character of the cinematic image and its uses of sight and sound as well as silence. In both Rossellini's and Pasolini's film, the figure of "Mamma Roma" raises meta-cinematic questions – not answers – about the image, how it relates to a specific context, and how it circulates. Viano claims that the Pasolini film in contrast to Rossellini's "shakes realism's foundations."[18] I maintain that *Open City*, too, shakes the foundations of realism, but in ways that override a reductive historicism that insists on fidelity to events and focuses instead on questions of belief given the mediated nature of "reality." In both films, the role of the character (and the audience) as spectators is central: what they see has changed and what the filmmakers have to reveal has changed as well, specifically in relation to the power of inherited clichés.

Pina's role is counterbalanced by several other clichéd images of femininity. Her sister, Lauretta (Carla Rovere), is identified with fascism. She is a cliché of the prostitute, profiting from the Nazis by selling her body for money and goods, but unlike the women Anna and her dying friend in Amleto Palermi's *La peccatrice* (*The Sinner*, 1940), she is neither redeemed nor killed for her transgressions. She embodies a mundane and cynical view of the world. She is antagonistic, even treacherous, toward her family, and devoted to survival at any cost. Her boorishness is revealed in her clichéd response to seeing Francesco on his wedding night. Unaware of Pina's death, she asks him if Pina has already chucked him out. However, as if to temper these clichés, the film gives her some self-awareness and remorse, as she later admits to Marina, "Perhaps Manfredi is right. Maybe we are stupid." Lauretta's persona is hardly one of exotic spectacle. Rather, she offers a rather unspectacular image of prostitution in contrast to images of the fallen woman in the prior commercial cinema.

Pina's role contrasts with another clichéd cinematic image of femininity: the *femme fatale*, the ungovernable woman, the woman bent on eluding the men who would seek to dominate her. In the silent era, this figure was exemplified in such films as *Cabiria* (1914) through the figure of Sofonisba, the incarnation of passion, defiance of the social order, and finally of self-destructiveness. She was found in the historical dramas, where the subject transcends domestic constraints, where the action is situated in an aristocratic context, and where the women, given their upper-class position, had access to social power.

In certain ways, Marina, an actress, lover, and ultimate betrayer of Manfredi, conforms to this version of femininity. She is a much more developed figure, more melodramatic, and hence more complicated than Lauretta. In Millicent Marcus' analysis of the film, Marina is cast in the image of the "diva of prewar Italian cinema."[19] But while Marina might be compared to such divas of the silent era as Lyda Borelli or Francesca Bertini, she has none of their energy or power. Similarly, if one compares Marina's character to the few divas of the sound cinema of the 1930s and early 1940s, such as Isa Miranda or Luisa Ferida, she lacks the galvanizing appearance, demeanor, eroticism, or glamour of these stars. If she is a diva, she is a pallid reincarnation, as if *Open City* refuses to lend her the tragic dignity claimed by *divismo*, the star system of early Italian cinema. Furthermore, the humble

beginnings that she shares with Pina are removed from the upper-class milieu of the diva.

Divismo highlights the exceptional and the charismatic, even supernatural, qualities associated with the diva. Among her many characteristics, the one major quality of the diva is her decadence. She is identified with a world of passion, transgression, and unattainable desire. She is an embodiment of the "European culture that precedes the First World War."[20] The diva not only belongs to early cinema but particularly to its manifestation as a form of "hysterical cinema," one that is invested in the affective character of a particular style of existence. She is removed from the world of ordinariness and conveys the raging and conflicting passions that drive her to suicidal or murderous actions. In her acting, gestures, languid and sensual movements, nuances of facial expression, and attitudes that scorn conventional life, she embodies the enigmatic character of femininity, its "mystery," elusiveness, and threatening nature.

The diva brings to the popular cinema an operatic fascination with eroticism and violence. Her figure can also be considered as a surrogate for the commercial cinema itself as a form of spectacle, where the body of film is analogized to the body of woman, mysterious, appealing, and identified with sexuality and violence. Most particularly, the historical moment of the diva coincides with and "incarnates the behavior of a class that has lost its political and economic hegemony, but remains a model and point of reference for all of European theatrical and cinematic culture."[21] It is clear from this description that the diva is not merely a persona but a cinematic style that bespeaks a certain way of life. It is also clear that she belongs to a certain moment in time that has vanished.

Marina's role does not reach these heights of excess and spectacle. Although the conception of her character in broad strokes bears similarities to the cinema of the Fascist years, it is certainly a severely diminished representation, another instance of the film's tampering with cinematic clichés. She is associated with a scaled-down opulence in surroundings, furniture, clothing, and make-up. The predominant view of her in the film is one of fragility and ambivalence rather than of searing passion leading to self-immolation. In her pursuit of Manfredi and in her succumbing to Ingrid's tawdry offer of drugs and a fur coat, she seems like a bargain basement *femme fatale*, a figure

of pathos, a debased and confused image of femininity. Certainly, as Marcus indicates, she is a negative counterpart to Pina and the women in the tenement. She serves to introduce the viewer to the world of the Nazis and acts as informer and collaborator. In effect, she functions in a role similar to that of the Italian police chief who reports to Bergmann (Harry Feist), the Nazi commandant. She is identified with certain props of the comedic and melodramatic "white telephone" films of the Fascist era. However, if she is a parody of female roles during Fascism, she is a rather unattractive simulacrum of them. She also becomes increasingly sinister in her insistence on locating Manfredi. In the sequence where Manfredi brings a feverish Francesco to her apartment, she acts the part of a concerned lover, but her movements are those of a sleepwalker. She is literally drugged.

Marina, like Lauretta, is attached to objects, and is vulnerable to seduction, whether the seducer is male or female. She is devoted to conventional appearances. For her, love requires attentiveness on the part of the lover. In her theatrical and melodramatic world, there are no other objectives than the accumulation of commodities and admiration at any cost. At the end of the film, she is reduced to an inert body shorn of the fur coat that was the price of her betrayal. The objects she sought to enhance her image are the ones that finally reveal her as objectified and collapsed image. In every sense, she is akin to characters seen most often in film noir. She is a cipher, and she cannot be considered apart from Ingrid, who offers another example of the film's portrayal of the Nazi as homosexual. Ingrid not only provides Marina with the drugs she craves, she also offers her physical contact and the promise of luxurious commodities.

The relationship between Marina and Ingrid is one of manipulation, often described by critics as lesbian, since Ingrid does practice a form of seduction on Marina in her "gifts" of drugs and a fur coat, and in her caresses and fondling. Presumably, this lesbian characterization derives from an enduring cliché of the lesbian as masculine, characterized by Ingrid's severe clothing and masculine suit, her commanding air, and her assumed protective stance toward and fondling of Marina. As the film portrays Marina and Ingrid's relations, they bear the stigma of "perversity," whose language most often is translated into sexual terms. Thus it would seem that the world of *Open City* adheres to a hetero-normative view of relations,

the "normal" being that which transpires between men and women. Pina, though pregnant out of wedlock, is identified with "normal" sexuality, whereas Marina is identified as aberrant. Marina appears as a cliché drawn from Fascist cinema and its penchant for melodrama in particular. Her movements throughout are those of a somnambulist. She is a drugged and weakened version of the protagonist in *La bella addormentata* (*Sleeping Beauty*, 1942). But *Open City* does not remain at the level of bad melodrama: it uses melodrama to reveal the powerful clichés endemic to Fascist discourse.

The meta-cinematic aspects of the film are closely tied to the portraits of these two women. In their conforming to cinematic clichés of femininity, the characters are deprived of depth and the spectator must look elsewhere to locate the investment in the narrative. These characters are evidence of the ubiquity of clichés that inhabit the cinematic world, but they function as part of the film's pedagogy that invites the spectator to reflect on their theatricality with a difference: they constitute the power of the false as a means of undermining reigning and rigidified conceptions of agency and social truth.

Connections between homosexuality and fascism began to proliferate in the postwar period, reaching their apogee in such films as Bernardo Bertolucci's *Il conformista* (*The Conformist*, 1971) and *1900* (1976). If Ingrid plays out the clichéd image of the lesbian, Bergmann is a clichéd incarnation of femininity, an effeminate male homosexual fastidious in dress and in his manner of speaking. His hand gestures are florid, his walk mincing, and his voice high pitched.[22] Nazis are thus portrayed through a strategy that identifies destructive characters with "perverse" sexual attributes. Moreover, Bergmann and Ingrid have reversed conventional gender roles in a film that is engaged in consistently shifting gender categories. The film's tendency to upset gender and sexual identification is not unique to the portrayal of the Nazis. It has its parallel, albeit contrasting, in the subtle inversion of masculinity and femininity through the portraits of Pina, Don Pietro, and Manfredi.

The film also invokes the cliché of machinelike behavior in making the actions of the Nazis seem choreographed as if they are puppets without spontaneity. Even the seemingly insightful and gloomy speeches by Hartmann (Joop Van Hulzsen) on how the Nazis "have

strewn Europe with corpses" and "will perish without hope" are revealed as a cliché as he shortly after performs his duties mechanically in executing Don Pietro.

Beyond their expression in the presentation of the various characters, the issue of cliché extends to the different forms of looking invoked by the film. For instance, Bergmann's role is one of surveillance and control. He is a collector and surveyor of photos and maps. He describes how he does not have to leave his office but "strolls" through Rome by means of his collection of photographs of subversive individuals. Bergmann obsessively surveys his subjects from a distance in the hope of entrapping them. His gaze is identified with the depersonalized gaze of power, though it is revealing that he is reluctant to look directly at the victims in his torture chamber.

Marina is identified with another form of the gaze, a vicarious one viewed through mirrors and through the eyes of another, Ingrid. As she looks at her image and Ingrid's in the mirror, the film links vision to sexuality and to a form of looking that is distorted – narcissistic, obsessive, and addicted – a cinematic cliché (see Fig. 11). In the case of these two women, the film invokes the suggestion of lesbian sexuality but in desexualized terms, as if it is an image emptied of thought and feeling. Ingrid entices Marina with drugs and material objects so as to extract the desired information from her concerning Manfredi's whereabouts. As in the portrait of Bergmann, there is little suggestion of eroticism in Ingrid's viewing of her victims. These characters' actions do not conform to clichés of sadism that locate pleasure in inflicting and looking at suffering. Rather, if there is any desire associated with Bergmann and Ingrid, it is channeled into the production of voyeurism, pain, and death. All forms of sexuality become something other than pleasure and desire: they are identified with aggression, the inflicting of pain, and with annihilation.[23]

By contrast, Don Pietro offers a different version of looking. His gaze is specifically aligned to the film's project of interrogating vision. He is forced (as is the spectator from Don Pietro's perspective) to view the painful scene of Manfredi's torture and death. Ironically, he is without the aid of his eyeglasses, but he sees. What should be an impediment to his vision is not an obstacle in this instance. Through his perspective the scene functions as an intervention into traditional ways of regarding cinematic spectatorship, undermining

11. Marina and Ingrid's narcissistic gaze into the mirror. (BFI Films: Stills, Posters and Designs)

stereotypical associations of masculinity with action and femininity with being acted upon. Through sight and sound, the scene, while making analogies with Christ's sacrificial death, stresses through close-ups his conflicting reactions. Once again, the film has overcome the clichéd dimensions of cinematic images to create a profound sense of the power and complexity of vision.

The spectator is also treated to panoramic views of the urban landscape in the opening and closing shots of Rome that frame the film. Similar to *Mamma Roma*, *Roma città aperta* ends with the remote image of St. Peter's, thus maintaining the film's insistence on visualizing connections between character and urban milieu. In particular, the final long shot of Rome with the image of St. Peter's in the distance is associated with images of youth. The young boys, after viewing the death of Don Pietro, march solemnly toward St. Peter's (perhaps parodying the cliché of the Fascist March on Rome in 1922) (see Fig. 12). The film spectator's gaze follows the movement of the young boys but the images viewed do not yield a determinate meaning but rather uncertainty about their role. The familiar becomes unfamiliar.

12. **After Don Pietro's death, the young boys march toward Rome. (BFI Films: Stills, Posters and Designs)**

The spectator views St. Peter's as a distant image and nothing more than an image – as a historical landmark and as a visual cliché, but as a cliché invested with a different source of power, specifically as a consequence of the film's break with traditional narrative continuity and resolution. In the *Open City*'s final sequence, the cliché is subjected to a cinematic gaze that undermines an automatic response and instead invites reflection.

There are other ways in which *Open City* challenges cinematic cliché. For example, in connection with form and style, the film not only reverses gendered expectations; it reverses genre expectations as well, combining comedy and melodrama. Of this mixing, Bondanella writes that "the humor is placed within a profoundly tragicomic vision of life that juxtaposes melodramatic moments or instances of comic relief and dark humor to the most tragic of human experiences that reconstruct a moment in recent Italian history."[24] The comic scenes most frequently commented upon are the one in which the priest turns a statuette of St. Rocco away from a nude

statuette and the one in which he hits Pina's father on the head with a frying pan to keep the old man from calling attention to the hidden gun and bomb in the room.

The role of the masculine figures has also to be accounted for in the context of the film's contamination of generic and gendered categories. Images of masculinity are inextricably linked to *Open City*'s reconfiguration of clichés of femininity. The male figures – Francesco, Manfredi, and Don Pietro – are drawn from the repertoire of Western images of heroism and sacrifice, images that were not alien to the cinema of the early years of Fascism. The male protagonists of *Open City* embody unstinting devotion to belief, as Francesco indicates to Pina, in the promise of a new and different world. These attitudes are also associated with the male characters of such Ventennio films as *Squadrone bianco* (*The White Squadron*, 1936) and *L'assedio dell' Alcazar* (*The Siege of the Alcazar*, 1940).

Though the emphasis in *Open City* on discipline and readiness to sacrifice may connect it to some films produced under Fascism (including Rossellini's own), important differences in style and context undermine this type of comparison. Francesco escapes and the Austrian deserter takes his own life. Moreover, the focus in the last part of the film is on the martyrdom of the Communist and the priest, not on their escape and overcoming of the Nazis. They refuse to talk. Manfredi's torture and death, his mutilated and slumped body, suggest the iconography of Christ. Thus the film offers a clichéd iconographic analogy, but it also subverts cinematic expectation in equating both the priest and the Communist to Christ, since these two figures are traditionally often presented in conflict.

Furthermore, in contrast to conventional religious portraits that emphasize priestly piety, antiworldliness, and moral purity, Don Pietro is cast in worldly terms as a political figure, a courier for the Resistance. Like many of Rossellini's later religious figures, the priest's portrayal defies the institutional constraints of both the Roman Catholic Church and the Fascist state. But most important, he becomes a filter through which the spectator can observe the tragic events. Observation and reflection – not action – are central to his role and these traits become identified with Manfredi as well.

Similar to the portrait of the priest, Manfredi is constrained to assume an inactive role, more acted upon than acting. Although we do

see him briefly as one of the participants in the attack on the trucks after Pina is killed, his heroism does not consist primarily in confronting his oppressors in militant actions but in his passivity, in his maintaining silence in the face of excruciating torture. In the cases of both Don Pietro and Manfredi, the film transforms prior cinematic conceptions of masculinity by presenting these male characters as passive, even as identified with qualities associated with femininity, thus undermining conventional expectations of their behavior. By merging clichés of masculinity with clichés of femininity, the portraits of the Nazis as well as of the Resistance figures call attention to their cinematic genealogy.

Open City, while maintaining what seems to be a conventional style and adhering to correspondingly conventional values, is in fact, through its treatment of gendered and sexual clichés, involved in transforming cinematic style and content. Through its blatant challenge to clichéd modes of cinematic representation, the film challenges conventional filmmaking. In particular, the film makes a powerful case for the existence of cliché as an indication of the prevailing common sense of the culture and even of its inevitability, but at the same time also indicates the urgent need to critique, modify, or otherwise surpass the reign of clichés.

In *Open City*'s treatment of the cinematic image, cliché is inescapable. But before it can be challenged, it must be recognized as cliché. In the film's portraits of both female and male characters in the film, it has defamiliarized the characters and landscape, offering a way of looking at film that disrupts a comfortable equation between narrative and "tradition." In his later films, Rossellini will go even further to use clichés in order to break their power. The most ubiquitous cliché specifically concerns the power of the artist/film director (and the characters in the films) single-handedly to produce change, an issue that Rossellini will explore in *La macchina ammazzacattivi* (*The Machine to Kill Bad People*, 1952). But even as early as *Open City*, in its resistance to resolution and to univalent interpretation, Rossellini undertakes an interrogation of clichés concerning the relation between cinema and cultural transformation.

Through its invocation of clichés and through its unsettling of their predictable impact, *Open City* embarks on a style that invites an unconventional relation to visualization. Through dissolving links

between the landscape of Rome and the various characters, through reconfiguring characterization, and especially through the highlighting of clichéd speech and action, *Open City* de-territorializes the cinematic image. Specifically, the film's representations of women cannot be simply attributed to conventional oppositions between action and reflection, holy mother and whore, emotion and intellect, and speech and silence. In this film's form of neorealism, thought struggles, sometimes vainly, to free itself from repetition and sameness, and clichéd images of gender are clues to that struggle. In its very hybridity, *Open City* provides evidence of the need to account for neorealism not as a movement but as a cultural moment in the attempt to produce a cinema of thought, one that challenges automatic responses to the cinematic world.

NOTES

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2*: *The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 20.
2. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 209.
3. See Peter Bondanella, *The Films of Robert Rossellini* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 46, and his essay in the present volume.
4. David Forgacs, *Rome Open City* (Roma Città Aperta) (London: BFI Publishing, 2000), p. 12.
5. For an extended discussion of the critical role of the melodramas identified under the rubric of "calligraphism" in the early 1940s, see Marcia Landy, *The Folklore of Consensus: Theatricality in the Italian Cinema, 1930–1943* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998), pp. 169–236.
6. Peter Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 41–60.
7. Ibid., p. 50.
8. Deleuze, *Cinema 1*, p. 207.
9. Forgacs, *Open City*, p. 54.
10. Millicent Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 50.
11. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, p. 39.
12. Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, p. 90.
13. Victoria de Grazia, *How Fascism Ruled Women: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), p. 78.
14. Marcia Landy, *Fascism in Film, The Italian Commercial Cinema, 1930–1943* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 72–118. See also Landy, *The Folklore of Consensus*, pp. 237–93.

15. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, p. 46.
16. Forgacs, *Open City*, pp. 37–38.
17. Maurizio Viano, *Certain Realism: Making Use of Pasolini's Film Theory and Practice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993), p. 85.
18. Ibid., pp. 92–93.
19. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism*, p. 38.
20. Gian Piero Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano: Il cinema muto 1895–1929*, vol. 1 (Rome: Riuniti, 1993), p. 81.
21. Ibid., pp. 76–77.
22. On the subject of homosexuality, lesbianism, and neorealism, see Terri Ginsberg, "Nazis and Drifters: The Containment of Radical (Sexual) Knowledge in Two Italian Neorealist Films," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 1, no. 2 (1990): 241–61.
23. Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies: Male Bodies, Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, vol. 2, trans. Stephen Conway (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 243. Theweleit writes that what "fascism, therefore, produces is not the microcosmic multiplicity of a desire that longs to expand and multiply across the body of the world, but a 'desire' absorbed into the totality machine, and into ego-armor, a desire that wishes to incorporate the earth into itself."
24. Bondanella, *The Films of Roberto Rossellini*, p. 53.

DAVID FORGACS

5 Space, Rhetoric, and the Divided City in *Roma città aperta*

INTRODUCTION

Rome Open City does not depict an open city, at any rate not in the sense this expression had in the Second World War of a demilitarized urban zone. What it shows is Rome under military occupation, a city divided. On one side are German troops and police, together with those Italians who collude with them, rounding up citizens for forced labor and rooting out political opponents. On the other side are the antifascist underground and the mass of ordinary Roman people who might not actively resist the occupation but who nonetheless resent it and do not willingly comply with it. When the first reviews in Italy referred to the film's title as sarcastic or ironic they were talking about a deliberate sarcasm and irony that would have had an immediate resonance with audiences who had lived under the occupation and other Italians who knew about it.[1]

Rome had first been declared an "open city" by the Italian government on August 14, 1943, three weeks after Mussolini had been removed from office and as the Italians began to prepare a separate armistice with the British and Americans in secret from their German allies. The declaration, which came the day after the second American bombing raid on the city (the bomb damage we see in the film is probably from the August 13 raid, though some bombs had fallen in the Prenestino area also in the first raid on July 19, which had devastated San Lorenzo just to the north), was communicated through the Vatican, and it referred to Rome's special status as a sacred city, "centre of the Catholic religion."[2] The term "open

city" was used again on September 10, 1943, in the text of the agreement with which Italian troops surrendered Rome to the advancing German army. However, the Germans had no intention of respecting the terms of this agreement and they proceeded to occupy Rome and set up a military command there. The Allies consequently continued their bombing raids on the city. In other words, the notion of the open city was only ever unilaterally applied by the Italians and it was flouted by the Germans and thence by the Allies.

Nevertheless, respect for the terms of the September 10 agreement and demand for restoration of the open city status remained among the principal slogans used by the antifascist movement in Rome to galvanize popular support against the Germans. Among the Communist Party leaflets distributed in workplaces in March 1944, six months into the nine-month occupation, one, headed "Imponiamo il rispetto di Roma Città Aperta" ("Let's insist that Rome Open City is respected"), stated: "the violation of the Open City pact by the Germans, which is provoking Anglo-American bombing, is getting worse all the time. . . . We must unite and organize a collective, forceful and compact struggle against the cynical violation of Rome Open City and its disastrous consequences." Another leaflet, addressed to the "Workers of Rome," put "respect for Rome Open City" at the top of a list of demands, followed by an end to round-ups for forced labor and calls for a doubling of pay, increased food rations, and regular benefit payments for the unemployed.[3]

The early audiences of the film in other countries who were unaware that the open city pact had been ignored by the Germans (and thence by the Allies) could work it out from what they saw on screen. The film showed the Germans imposing their rule on the city, and it showed the damage produced by the Allied air raids. But they could also work out from the film how the desire for an "open city" helped to drive the organized resistance and to fuel the anger of ordinary people.

As a visual depiction of the divided city, the film has at once the value of a testimony and the status of a rhetorical construction. It is a testimony because, for all its artifice – actors, scripted performances, built sets – it records on celluloid how parts of Rome looked at the end of the Second World War, including sites of memorable events. The most notable instance is the field at Forte Bravetta, used as the

setting for Don Pietro's execution at the end of the film. It was on this site that several antifascists, including Don Giuseppe Morosini, one of the models for Don Pietro, had been shot during the occupation. After the liberation of Rome (June 10, 1944) various leading Fascists who had collaborated or carried out torture or repression in the city during the occupation were shot on the same site, and some of these executions (those of Pietro Caruso on September 23, 1944, Federico Scarpato on April 27, 1945, and Pietro Koch on June 5, 1945) can be seen in the section directed by Luchino Visconti of the documentary film *Giorni di gloria* (1945). (This film, produced by Titanus with the collaboration of the U.S. Army's Psychological Warfare Branch, was first screened in September 1945 in the same festival at which *Open City* had its public première).

In this way, an otherwise ordinary-looking strip of land serves as a stimulus to collective memory and has an authenticating function in a scene that is in all other respects a dramatized reconstruction, from the shaky hand of the Fascist who fumbles with the cigarettes and matches to the presence of the young whistling spectators. The latter detail, crucial to the pathos of this scene, is historically quite implausible: Forte Bravetta was a guarded area during the occupation, and outsiders could not gain access to executions. There was no wire fence around it and, in fact, the shots in the film of the boy's reactions were done elsewhere and at a different time.

The film as a whole shows too, often in a quite accidental way, particularly in the scenes with "nonactors," how people in Rome dressed, gestured, spoke, and moved about in 1945. It also shows how people in the city at that time *wanted* the occupation and Resistance to be remembered, namely as a period of collective suffering in the face of violence and injustice that had produced a relatively unified resistance movement and martyrs for the cause of liberty. This representation of events is tendentious and historically questionable because it straightens out a more complex and ambiguous historical truth. Nevertheless, it needs to be recognized as also in itself a form of testimony, the result of a strong collective wish to give a particular kind of account of recent history.

Naturally, once one starts to talk in this way about the film as a testimony of shared beliefs and desires, its status as testimony begins to shade into its status as rhetorical construction. I am using the terms *rhetoric* and *rhetorical* here in the generic sense developed in classical

antiquity of a conscious use of language by a speaker or writer to persuade an audience of something, as in a law court or a political assembly. This process involves a selection (*inventio*) and a particular arrangement (*dispositio*) of linguistic and stylistic elements. I suggest that analogous processes may be applied in a film. I do not wish to enter here the larger and more complex question of whether film may be considered a language, but simply to claim that any arrangement of narrative or visual elements in a film that serves an identifiable purpose of persuasion of the audience may be described as rhetorical. My argument in this instance is that the representation of remembered events that gives shape to Rossellini's film is fabricated for specific persuasive ends. It involves the working up of certain pieces of raw material into a selective myth or legend to the exclusion of other memories: those, notably, of political divisions among Italians, guilt over nonresistance, cowardice, or collusion.

Just as the film organizes its raw story material, drawn from real events, into a coherent narrative about the courage and solidarity of Italians against the foreign oppressor, so it arranges its raw visual material into a distinctive rhetorical shape. Implied spatial metaphors and symbols impose neat shapes on historically messy events, just as clear spatial contrasts reinforce the social and moral polarities constructed in the story. In doing so, they play a key part in the film's fashioning of a good memory out of the occupation and its way of persuading audiences to see characters and actions in a certain light. It is this rhetorical use of space in the film that I shall examine in what follows. I shall discuss four ways in which the film rhetorically organizes urban space: by *framing* the city with the long shots that open and close the film; by suggesting *vertical divisions* within the city between occupiers and occupied; by tracing out *horizontal movements and oppositions* across the city; and by using the various elements of *mise-en-scène* in interior space to heighten contrasts between different characters and settings.[4]

THE CITY FRAMED

The film's frame, its formal opening and ending, is made up of the title sequence with the opening credits and the final shot and cast credits. Film credits are like the printed front and end matter in books, and these two sequences are, respectively, the film's title page and

end page, or its front and back cover. Both of them show panoramas of the city's skyline. In the Italian release print (of which two copies were restored from the original negative in 1995 and are held at the Cineteca Nazionale), after the names of the leading players and the production company, the opening title – "ROMA" in black letters with "CITTÁ APERTA" over it in white – is superimposed on a leftward pan looking out from Viale Trinità dei Monti, above Piazza di Spagna, west over the city center to the opposite side of the Tiber (see Fig. 13). This is followed by the writer's and director's credits and the conventional disclaimer that any correspondence to real people or events is coincidental even though the characters and actions depicted in the film are inspired by "the tragic and heroic events of the nine months of Nazi occupation." Action music is played over the titles, evocative of that used in contemporary newsreels and war films, which sets the tone for the first sequence, when the Germans come looking for Manfredi, as well as later action scenes. The closing shot, at the end of which the caption "FINE" is superimposed, is almost a reverse of the first in terms of the city's topography. It is a rightward pan from the opposite side of the river, filmed from Monte Mario, showing the boys walking down the Via Trionfale against distant buildings (see Fig. 12). It is accompanied by the lugubrious musical theme from earlier in the film that has struck up at the moment of Don Pietro's death and continues until the final fade to black. The presence in both the opening and closing shots of the dome of St. Peter's allows the viewer to match the two shots as near reversals of one another.

If these two shots serve, like the first and last pages of a book, to contain the story that unfolds within them, they are also containers in a visual sense. As extreme long shots they are a pair of macroscopic views of the city and they conceal the more microscopic views that the rest of the film reveals. As the story unfolds, the spectator is taken in closer and shown particular districts, streets, interiors of houses, stairwells, rooms, cellars, pieces of furniture, clothes, and individual faces. The Rome shown in the film is a city of dwellings, not of monuments. Apart from those opening and closing shots, the only tourist site shown in the film is Piazza di Spagna, with the steps of Trinità dei Monti (known in English as the Spanish Steps). This appears in the first two shots after the opening credits, where it is

13. **Title card, "Roma città aperta," over skyline. (Frame enlargement, Cineteca Nazionale, Rome)**

at once functional in determining the time and place of the action and rhetorically effective in showing the German invaders in the heart of the city, and again in the two photographs of Manfredi with Marina, seen respectively in Bergmann's office and Marina's dressing room.

There are no ancient monuments: no Coliseum (shown in the Rome episode of Rossellini's next film, *Paisà*, made and released in 1946, with American soldiers), no Forum, Arch of Constantine, Column of Trajan, Baths of Caracalla. Nor does one see any of the landmarks of Fascist Rome, apart, significantly, from the E42 district in the background during the partisan attack on the convoy of trucks.[5] The top of the Victor Emmanuel II monument, that grotesque symbol of modern Italian nationhood (designed by Giuseppe Sacconi in the 1880s, though finally inaugurated only in 1911) is visible in the opening panorama, but in the film there are no shots of it or Palazzo Venezia, from whose balcony Mussolini addressed the crowds; no Via dell'Impero, the vast boulevard (renamed Via dei Fori Imperiali

after the war) that he ordered to be built from Piazza Venezia to the Coliseum, burying large parts of a major archaeological site; no Foro Mussolini, the sports stadium (later renamed Foro Olimpico) in the Flaminio district to the north. By leaving out both the tourist spots and the symbols of Fascist power, the film in effect reappropriates Rome for its ordinary citizens and erases the traces of the Fascist regime, freezing the city during the occupation and Resistance at some time in the early months of 1944. In this way, what is selectively erased or absent from the geography of the film is just as important to its overall expression and to its rhetorical treatment of its subject as what is shown.

THE VERTICAL CITY: SURVEILLANCE AND RESISTANCE

The first two sequences after the opening titles begin to establish a representation of the city as vertically divided: seen from above by the Germans; known and used from below by citizens and the Resistance. The Germans fail to capture the Communist partisan, Manfredi, who gets away over the roof, helped by his landlady, who sees the Germans coming from the window and then stalls them, pretending to know nothing of Manfredi's whereabouts. The shot of the Gestapo men and the women on the roof dissolves into a map of Rome divided into sectors at which Major Bergmann's hand, with gold bracelet and cigarette, points as he explains to the Italian police chief, the *questore*, that the division of the city into fourteen zones is an application of the Schröder Plan, which permits "the scientific round-up of large masses of men with the deployment of minimal forces" (see Fig. 14). His subordinate then enters and tells Bergmann that Manfredi has evaded capture.

The map in sectors depicts the Gestapo's mode of subdividing and controlling the city. Metaphorically, though, it resembles a web. At its center is this fastidious Nazi who, without having to leave his base (in Via Tasso, near the central Stazione Termini) to exert himself physically or dirty his hands, seeks to draw victims into his center of operations where his subordinates will torture them. If they confess, they will provide him with further knowledge of their connections and this knowledge will lead to further arrests and ultimately,

14. **Bergmann and the *questore* in front of the map of the city in sectors. (BFI Films: Stills, Posters and Designs)**

Bergmann hopes, to the breaking of the clandestine organization. But, as the failure to capture Manfredi demonstrates, these plans may be thwarted by the Resistance. Bergmann is angered by the news of his escape but contains his anger in front of the *questore*.

Surveillance – the controlling view of the city from above, as seen on a map, or from a distance, as through a camera lens – is the key to Bergmann's particular form of power, but also its limitation. As Peter Brunette has pointed out, his power of surveillance is a direct function of his distance from the city at street level.[6] He views it from above, he knows it through maps and photographs (cameras are like extensions of his eyes), through his agents and spies, such as Ingrid, and through the collaboration of the Fascist police, who have local knowledge and intelligence networks of their own that he can tap into. At the same time, his very distance from the city he seeks to control means that he may be eluded by those who are helped out

by citizens or who move around the city on foot and through secret routes.

Bergmann's use of photographs epitomizes both the intrusive power of his surveillance and its limitations. When the *questore* looks at the photograph of Manfredi with Marina that Bergmann has handed to him and asks "How did you find him?" Bergmann replies: "I met him here, on this desk. Every evening, I take a long walk around the streets of Rome without leaving my office. I'm very fond of this kind of photography that captures people almost by surprise. You meet some very interesting people." He takes more prints from the desk drawer and shows the *questore* one of a group of armed Italian partisans that has been sent from Berlin. With the two photographs in one hand and a magnifying glass in the other, the *questore* compares Manfredi's face with that of the second man from the right in the group. "No mistake: it's him" (see Fig. 15).

An almost identical photograph of Manfredi with Marina appears later in the scene in Marina's dressing room at the variety theater. Marina has it on the mirror, and when she goes out of the room, Ingrid walks over to look at it. The implication is that Ingrid has previously obtained or made a copy of the photograph for Bergmann. It is this shot, by linking Ingrid with Bergmann, that clinches her identity as a Gestapo agent. With Marina absent, the viewer obtains information about Ingrid that she lacks.

The shot of the two photographs overlaid and magnified in the *questore*'s hand economically conveys to the audience four different pieces of information that are equally functional to the narrative: the dual identity of Manfredi, the partisan commander passing as an ordinary civilian; Bergmann's power of surveillance and his knowledge of these two identities; Bergmann's display to the *questore* of his superior police skills, which confirm the Italians' subalternity to the Germans; and the limits of Bergmann's power: the *questore* may grasp two photographs of Manfredi, but the real Manfredi has just evaded the Gestapo. In fact, it is only when the *questore*, in a later scene, produces a further photograph, from Fascist police files, that Bergmann is able to identify Manfredi correctly as Luigi Ferraris, Communist leader of the military wing of the antifascist movement. Although he acknowledges the help of the Italian police, he appropriates the information for his own use. This reinforces in the film's message the

15. Two photos in the *questore's* hand. (Frame enlargement, Cineteca Nazionale, Rome)

idea that the Germans are in control of the work of surveillance and repression and the Fascists are merely their subordinates.

Beneath the city seen from above, and in large part hidden from the occupier's gaze, is the city from below, known and used by its inhabitants and by the Resistance activists. This city is full of hidden routes on foot, including escape routes over rooftops (the opening sequence), through a basement washroom in the tenement (see Fig. 16), where a woman (played by Letizia Spezzichino, one of the residents of the building in Via Montecuccoli where the round-up was filmed) helps the men escape, or through secret back entrances, such as the alley through which the boys reenter the tenement after blowing up the petrol wagon.

The different "uses" of the city, on the one hand for surveillance and control from above and on the other for appropriation from below, by means of walking and other kinds of movement along the ground, was brilliantly described by Michel de Certeau in *Practices*

16. In the washroom, women help men escape. (Frame enlargement, Cineteca Nazionale, Rome)

of Everyday Life. Certeau compared the urban system of places to a language system, in that they both consist of a more or less fixed set of elements allowing infinite combinations by different users, and he likened the individual act of moving around the city to the act of speaking:

> The act of walking is to the urban system what the enunciation, or speech act, is to the language or to the utterances produced. At the most basic level there is a triple "enunciatory" function: first, a process of *appropriation* of the topographic system by the pedestrian (in the same way that a speaker appropriates and takes up the language system); second, a spatial *realization* of place (just as the act of speech [*parole*] is a sonorous realization of language [*langue*]); third, implied *relations* between differentiated positions, in other words, a set of pragmatic "contracts" in the form of movements (just as verbal enunciation is "allocution," it "places the other in front of" the speaker and brings contracts between other speakers into play). It seems, therefore, that one may make an initial definition of walking as the space of enunciation.[7]

17. "VV Lenin" on the wall behind the patrol. (Frame enlargement, Cineteca Nazionale, Rome)

In the city from below, feints and subterfuge have become a way of life and facades are deceptive: an antique shop is a front for a hidden printing press downstairs, a priest carrying books is really carrying money, a restaurant owner turns out to be a member of the underground who passes information to his comrades under the noses of the Germans, and the person we thought was Giorgio Manfredi turns out to be Luigi Ferraris but is subsequently given, by Don Pietro, a forged identity card in the name of Giovanni Episcopo. It is a city, too, where clandestine movements and communications cut across or beneath the official communications of those in power. In the opening sequence, as the Gestapo arrive to search Manfredi's apartment, a radio can be heard picking up the BBC Italian Service, known in Italy as Radio Londra, which was widely listened to during the Nazi occupation despite the risk of punishment.[8] On the printing press located beneath the antique shop that Don Pietro visits Francesco and others are running off copies of *L'Unità*; Francesco later smuggles a copy home past a Fascist curfew patrol for Manfredi to read. The shot of Bergmann in his office looking at this and the newspapers of

the other antifascist parties confirms that he has intelligence about the Underground, but it also shows, again, that he is unable fully to control or stem its activities. As such, it is an eloquent image of the power of the city below him, its ability to produce counterinformation against the official information (posters, leaflets, newspapers, radio bulletins) distributed by the Germans and Fascists. An image that works in a similar way is the shot of the slogan "VV [viva] Lenin" and another VV over a hammer and sickle which are scratched onto the exterior walls of a building behind the curfew patrol that stops Francesco (see Fig. 17).

Adriano Aprà has suggestively described this other city in the film as a dispersed or "decentralized" city, in opposition to the "centralized" city of the authorities.[9] This is another way of representing the division between above and below. The decentralized city, however, also has its own modes of internal cohesion and its strategies of everyday resistance. These strategies include, as well as clandestine movement around the city (a form of "spatial resistance"), alternative uses of language, from code names to communications hidden from the occupiers to sarcasm and derision (all forms of what we might call "linguistic resistance").

One example of the latter is insubordinate humor, directed against the dominators, which they either may not pick up or may not construe as openly subversive. When the German soldiers bring two live sheep into the restaurant and tell Flavio, the antifascist owner, that they have brought meat, he replies: "I run a restaurant, I'm not a butcher." "We'll be the butchers." "Ah, of course, I know you lot are the specialists." Similarly, when the Fascists arrive to search the washroom, they ask the woman, "What are you doing here?" "I'm washing my stuff." "Get outside. No one will touch your stuff. We're here." "Oh, of course, how stupid of me." Such jokes or ironic remarks are among the ruses of power available to subaltern peoples in situations of domination in which they have no legal outlets to express dissent. In creating horizontal cohesion among the dominated, they may be said to constitute in themselves an "art of resistance."[10] In the film these bits of dialogue work also by a rhetorical mechanism of double address: a speech is directed at characters in the story but its hidden meaning is picked up by the audience, who by sharing the joke, enter into secret complicity and solidarity with the Roman people on the screen. As these examples indicate, even though all the dialogue

and sound effects were postsynchronized, the aural dimension of the film is just as important to its overall dramatic and rhetorical effect, and to its recording of Rome in 1945, as its visual aspects.

THE HORIZONTAL CITY: MOVEMENTS AND OPPOSITIONS

As well as the vertical division of urban space into a site of surveillance and resistance, the film offers a second set of representations of the city, horizontal ones, showing "enunciatory" movements along the ground and contrasting opposite places: center and periphery; the office in Gestapo headquarters and that in Don Pietro's parish church; the working-class district where Pina and Marcello live and the bourgeois district where Marina has a rented apartment. The types of horizontal movement that may be made across the city depend in part on the vertical division. Those above, in command, impose curfews and restrictions on transport that impede the movement of citizens on the ground while they themselves may move around visibly, ostentatiously. They can do this either on foot (the Germans march and sing, as in the opening shot; the Fascists stop and search citizens at random in street patrols) or in motor vehicles, whereas the Resistance must move secretly, invisibly: in the film the partisans simply *appear* in different places, like Manfredi waiting outside Francesco's apartment, or standing on a hillcrest near E42 with his comrades when they attack the convoy of trucks, after having escaped from the tenement several miles away in the preceding sequence.

Some of these depictions of movement are of course exaggerated for dramatic effect, but they nevertheless have historical truth behind them. German patrols were in fact ordered to sing as they marched, as part of the public display of their power. Public transport was reduced to a trickle and the use of bicycles, at first restricted to the daylight hours, was soon banned altogether, impeding partisan activity and mobility: the German military command announced that any transgressors would be fired upon. As journalist Paolo Monelli wrote in *Roma 1943*, first published in 1945:

> It was forbidden to ride a bicycle, walk on certain pavements, cross certain streets, carry provisions indoors, wire or telephone outside Rome, leave or enter the city, spend the night in other people's

> houses. It was dangerous to walk with a parcel under your arm, to appear to be hurrying, to grow a beard too suddenly or to wear dark glasses. To harbour a fugitive, an escaped British prisoner or a draft dodger or to listen to Radio Bari or Radio Palermo were punishable by death.[11]

Movement around the city and the use of motor vehicles were closely controlled by the Germans and Fascists. Even the small minority of citizens wealthy enough to own private cars had to obtain permits to use them. The Germans and Fascists therefore monopolized the unrestricted use of transport and this gave them the advantages of speed and surprise (as in the round-up scene, in which their trucks, cars, and motorcycles suddenly appear and block the street, or the scene in which Manfredi, Don Pietro, and the Austrian are arrested when two cars swoop on them), but at the same time it made their vehicles vulnerable to attacks (like the one in E42 in the film) and to acts of sabotage by the partisans, who in turn had learned to move by stealth and hit targets without warning. Former partisan Mario Fiorentini subsequently recalled that Rome was a good place for guerrilla activities "because in Rome there are the seven hills and if you choose your places well you can attack vehicles in transit."[12]

Manfredi's movements around the city in the film show the Resistance in action as a horizontal network, with connections between center and periphery, district and district, supported by the complicity and solidarity of the population. They also open up a view of the city as a differentiated social space. Language again contributes to this: Manfredi's accent marks him out as not from Rome, and he has to be helped to hide by those who have local knowledge.[13] He first escapes arrest in his apartment in Piazza di Spagna. He then turns up outside Francesco's apartment in a working-class area, identified in the film by Bergmann as the Rione Prenestino, which lies near what was then the eastern edge of the city, and again he is helped out: he has gone to look for his comrade Francesco, but instead meets Pina, Francesco's fiancée, who has heard of him and gets Marcello to bring Don Pietro to him.

Within the tenement building there operates a micro-network of clandestine activity, that of the boys, with communications up and

down between the various floors on the staircase and with Romoletto on the roof, a network that is largely hidden from the view of the adults. Marcello operates as a go-between, a runner between the apartment building and Don Pietro, whose parish oratory he attends. When the building is raided, Don Pietro has to hide Romoletto's stash of weapons and Manfredi is helped to escape through the basement. In the scene following Pina's death, Manfredi appears in the GAP attack on the convoy of trucks in E42. After this, he and Francesco are put up by Marina in her apartment in the Parioli, a middle-class district to the northwest of the city center. It is from here that Marina makes the telephone call that betrays him and results in his being picked up the next day and pulled into Via Tasso, where he is tortured to death.

The action of the film thus zigzags horizontally between various parts of Rome, tracing out as it does so both a real social geography of the city and a set of symbolic oppositions. The Prenestino district was one of the new areas of working-class settlement built in the 1920s and 1930s. It lies along the Via Prenestina, one of the so-called consular roads that radiate from the city in every direction. Don Pietro is the parish priest ministering to this community. He can use the cover of the priesthood to move about the city (priests, as he points out, are exempted from the curfew) or to enter a sealed-off building (on the pretext of performing the last rites).

The Via Tiburtina, where Pina tells Manfredi her father had a tinsmith's shop and Marina's mother was a custodian (*portiera*) of an apartment block, is another consular road, forming one of the boundaries of San Lorenzo, a working-class district erected in the 1870s that had become known for its antifascism under Mussolini's regime and had been badly damaged by Allied bombs on July 19, 1943. When German troops fought their way into Rome along the consular roads on September 9–10, 1943, the residents of the new blocks on either side of them were among those who put up the fiercest resistance, just as they would later put up resistance to the occupiers. In March 1944 there were anti-German and antifascist actions in Quadraro, Quarticciolo, Centocelle, and Borgata Gordiani, all areas of new working-class settlement created to house the growing population of migrants into the city and those residents expelled to the periphery by the Fascist "gutting" (*sventramento*) of the city center. The tenement used

in the film, in Via Montecuccoli, was on seven stories built around a courtyard with apartments leading off staircases. This layout was typical of new residential dwellings in other parts of the city (and indeed in other Italian cities), so the building and street used in the film may be taken to stand for any of the peripheral working-class districts.

The Parioli district did contain some antifascist activity during the war (whereas subsequently it would become associated with neofascism), but in the film, it is identified principally with wealth and with Marina's aspirations to the high life, and as such, it functions in symbolic opposition to the working-class Rome of the Prenestino. Interior space and décor define the contrast between Pina's and Marina's apartments. In the former, a map of the Lazio region hangs on the wall, one enters straight into a communal eating space that is also a sleeping area, and the children sleep four to a room. In the latter, there are high ceilings, an entrance hall with several rooms leading off it, wide double doors, paintings, table lamps, and a plush upholstered bed. A jazz record plays on the gramophone. The telephone by the bed is a symbol of Marina's newly acquired wealth and the way she uses it from her bed, like an actress, is a sign of her decadence.

Whereas the radio had started to enter working-class homes in Italy during the war, the private domestic telephone was a rarity until the end of the 1950s. The only other telephones seen in the film are in Manfredi's apartment building in Piazza di Spagna (a communal telephone in the corridor) and the one in the Gestapo offices in Via Tasso, to which Marina is seen speaking. The private telephone thus links Marina's upward mobility directly with her treachery. It is a means of hidden communication able to thwart the communications networks of the Resistance. There is also a cinematic association here: the Italian bourgeois comedies of the late 1930s and early 1940s, many of which were based on Hungarian films or stage plays, had become known as "white telephone" films because they frequently depicted upper-middle class households with telephones. After the war, these films became associated generically with Fascism and "escapism." In Rossellini's film, morally centered in a working-class community, the domestic telephone is an alien element.

INTERIOR SPACE AND *MISE-EN-SCÈNE*

The last aspect of the film's organization of space that needs to be considered in rhetorical terms is the *mise-en-scène*, or the arrangement of space and objects in front of the camera: the selection of camera angles, lighting, set design, and props. I shall take a few salient examples of each by way of illustration.

To begin with camera angles and the framing of shots, one of the recurrent features in the interior sequences filmed on location in houses (in Piazza di Spagna for the sequence of Manfredi's escape and then in Via Montecuccoli) is the use of a shot up or down a stairwell. The choice of a high or low angle might well have been, to some extent, fortuitous, a result of the constraints of getting a suitably framed and lit shot when using a fixed camera inside real buildings. These shots also convey, to be sure, important indexical information about the appearance and shape of the buildings. But this does not alter the fact that they also have a particular set of rhetorical functions and effects that reinforce the notion of vertical divisions within the city. They communicate a strong sense of these buildings as sites of up-and-down movement and of competition for control of space. For the Germans and Fascists, these buildings are places where they may intrude forcibly for surveillance, arrests, round-ups. For the inhabitants, they are places where they have a right to live peacefully. For the Resistance activists, including the boys in Romoletto's gang, they are places from which, or into which, they may escape and hide or where they may keep weapons or conduct secret meetings, transactions, and activities.

The first such shot occurs less than two minutes into the film, when Manfredi, having gotten out onto the roof, looks down through the skylight. The shot shows the three Gestapo men from his point of view, foreshortened, with their helmets and SS insignia prominently visible. Manfredi has been able to escape because of his local knowledge of a vertical route out over the rootftops. The angle of the shot, and the fact that it is preceded and followed by a shot of Manfredi looking down, conveys to the viewer a sense of his power to foil his enemies. He is on top, they are below. The next shot formally related to this one is visually a reversal of it. It comes in the first sequence at the Via Montecuccoli block just after Manfredi has introduced

himself to Pina, and it is a shot from below, from Pina's point of view (cued by her look upwards), at Marcello, who (as the viewer establishes in subsequent scenes) has been with Romoletto on the roof. She is calling him to go and fetch Don Pietro.

The shot shows not only Marcello but also, in great detail, the bombed-out building where he and Pina live. Part of the wall has been blown away. What look like electrical cables or perhaps steel reinforcement wires are exposed. The concrete and plaster have been ripped away to reveal the wooden framework supporting the upper story. In rhetorical terms, this shot may be taken to communicate pathos – the suffering of a working-class community stricken by war – but predominantly, I believe, it conveys defiance: a sense of the creative resourcefulness of these children, who have turned their bombed dwelling into a hideout and a center of resistance (in *Germany Year Zero* [1947], by contrast, the symbolic meaning of ruined buildings will be overwhelmingly negative; although children play in the shells of abandoned dwellings, it is from the window of a bombed building that Edmund jumps to his death). The children of Romoletto's gang are, literally and figuratively, on top; they have eluded the surveillance of their parents to carry out their parallel war with a center of operations on the roof of a bomb-damaged building. All this is attenuated, as it is elsewhere in the film, by comedy: the boy being shouted at and "put in his place" by his mother.

The sequence of the round-up, culminating in the shooting of Pina, is cut faster than the rest of the film and is organized around a series of rapidly changing angles, including the high angle of the shot down onto the street from Pina's viewpoint as the trucks and motorcycles arrive and the low angle of the shot (which offended the American censors) from the Fascists' viewpoint as they look through a grille up the women's skirts and smile. Within this sequence, there is a shot from above that is similar in angle and composition to the early one of Manfredi looking down on the Gestapo officers, but this time, from Don Pietro and Marcello's point of view as they look down on the three Fascists who are climbing the stairs to check on the bedridden man to whom the priest has allegedly gone to administer the last rites (see Fig. 18). The editing of the sequence repeats several times a shot from this high angle, showing the stairwell down through several stories, alternating it with shots from a level angle of Don Pietro

18. Fascists climb the stairs at the Via Montecuccoli house. (Frame enlargement, Cineteca Nazionale, Rome)

and Marcello as they hurry downstairs to hide Romoletto's weapons and reach Biagio's room before the Fascists do. The accelerated cutting and the parallel editing in this sequence produces suspense and an alternation between slapstick and adventure, comedy and pathos, as various commentators have noted. But it also communicates powerfully the competition for control of space, the threat on the one hand to take over the lived space of this community and the struggle on the other to defend that space and its secrets: the wanted men in hiding the weapons. Pina's breaking out of the line and her desperate dash after the truck, again cut fast with shots from several angles, is also visibly a reaction against being hemmed in, having her own and her community's space invaded and controlled and, of course, having her fiancé forcibly taken away.

As for lighting, set design, and props, the scenes that stand out most emphatically are the ones in Gestapo headquarters in the latter part of the film. The faces of Manfredi and Don Pietro under interrogation are strongly illuminated, ostensibly by Bergmann's table lamp but presumably by a spotlight off camera. Conversely, dark shadows are thrown by objects or people offscreen: the shadow of an unseen guard falls across the Austrian crouched in the cell as Don Pietro is called

to interrogation; the shadow of what looks like a handpress, and suggests an instrument of torture, is cast on the wall of the torture room behind Bergmann as he tries to persuade Manfredi to talk (see Fig. 19). The same shadow appears again behind Don Pietro at the scene of Manfredi's death, perhaps working symbolically to suggest the scales of justice as he foretells the vengeance that will be wreaked on the Nazis.

One reason that this style of lighting appears emphatic is that it is in contrast to the more unobtrusive, "naturalistic" lighting of the other parts of the film. The same is true of the style of the furniture in the drawing room where the officers drink, play cards, and listen to music. The room has a decorative excess not seen elsewhere in the film: gilt-framed mirrors, chairs with elaborate tracery, paintings, silverware, an ice bucket, tall glasses, a leather-covered divan, and chaise longue. The objects, which perhaps we are meant to assume have been plundered from private houses, seem to have been thrown together haphazardly: a large gilt Cupid sits on a chair, a painting leans against a wall. Clearly, what this all communicates is "decadence," but it also functions emphatically in contrast with the sobriety of the décor elsewhere – in the working-class tenement, the sacristy of Don Pietro's parish church, the restaurant, but also in the torture room separated by just a few doors on the same floor. These are the two faces of Nazi power, each marked by a different form of excess: opulent decadence and murderous violence. The only other places in the film that are marked by any degree of decorative excess are Marina's dressing room at the cabaret and her apartment in the Parioli, fitted with an elegant double bed, telephone, and shaded table lamps.

Taken together and read in terms of a spatial rhetoric, what the emphatic visual elements in these studio scenes set at Via Tasso add up to is a set of ironic contrasts and oppositions both within the building – leisure/torture, violence/decadence – and between the world of the Nazis as a whole on the one hand, both violent and decadent, and that of the ordinary people of Rome on the other. Marina's rooms, the dressing room and apartment, do not quite fit into this opposition, but it is clear that, by implication, she has been seduced towards decadence away from her working-class roots. Not only are these contrasts between the Via Tasso sequences and the earlier ones

19. Bergmann in the torture room. (Frame enlargement, Cineteca Nazionale, Rome)

essential in enabling the viewer to place Nazism clearly within the film's rhetorical structure. The management of on-screen and off-screen space within the section of the film also contributes to build its atmosphere of escalating fear and violence: the invisible guard whose shadow is cast into the cell, the moments of torture that are not shown but are heard in the form of screams and registered on Don Pietro's wincing face, the sound of the piano from the drawing room spilling into the office as Bergmann or Ingrid enter and exit.

RHETORIC AND REALISM

Drawing together these points, we may conclude that there are various levels at which the film harnesses space to a rhetorical strategy of depicting the divided city and of reinforcing social and moral contrasts within it, and these different levels become integrated to persuade the audience to see people, places, and events in a determinate way. In saying this, I do not intend to reduce the meaning or value of the film to this rhetorical strategy or suggest that it exhausts everything of interest within it. The film retains considerable value and power as an evidential record, a testimony of the appearance of the

city and its inhabitants in 1945, as well as of how people at the end of the occupation wanted it to be remembered. There are also several elements of its fictional narrative, such as the execution of Don Pietro, which are strongly marked by historical truth and collective memory (Don Morosini was the only priest shot at Forte Bravetta, as a plaque on the site now recalls), at the same time as they exude artifice and emotion.

Indeed, perhaps the most important point about all this is that the rhetorical features I have been describing cut across, and compel us to deconstruct, the traditional critical oppositions between the artificial and the realistic, between fictional and documentary elements, in this film as in many others. The "realistic" depiction of the interior of Pina's apartment, the "documentary" recording of the exteriors and interiors of actual bombed buildings or the use of "nonactors" speaking with local pronunciation are just as much parts of the film's rhetorical enunciation as are the "artificial" depiction and lighting of the Gestapo headquarters reconstructed in a studio with props, the skilled performance of an experienced actor like Aldo Fabrizi, or the dubbing (by the German Roswitha Schmidt) of Ingrid, played by the Italian Giovanna Galletti.

NOTES

1. The title was described as "slightly sarcastic" ("lievemente sarcastico") by Alberto Moravia in his review of the premiere in *Libera Stampa*, September 25, 1945. Carlo Trabucco, in *Il Popolo* on the same day, said the film reconstructs "the harsh and tragic life lived during the imprisonment of Rome, when the irony of words defined the capital as an 'open city.'" Both reviews are reprinted in Adriano Aprà, ed., *Roma città aperta di Roberto Rossellini* (Rome: Comune di Roma, Assessorato alla Cultura, 1994), respectively on pp. 95–96 and 98. (All translations from Italian in the text of this chapter and the notes are mine, including those from the dialogue of the film).
2. Cesare De Simone, *Venti angeli sopra Roma. I bombardamenti aerei sulla Città Eterna, 19 luglio e 13 agosto 1943* (Milan: Mursia, 1993), p. 304.
3. The two leaflets quoted are in the Archivio del Partito Comunista in the Fondazione Istituto Gramsci, Rome, respectively APC 1943–1945, scatola 7, fascicolo "Roma sindacale," 9–6, and APC 1943–1945, s. 7, f. "Roma e Lazio sindacale," 13–3.
4. The main body of this essay elaborates the section on space from my monograph on the film in the BFI Film Classics series (London: BFI, 2000), where

I also discuss the co-presence of documentary and rhetorical representation and where I elaborate, at the end, the points in this paragraph about what the film excludes and fails to represent. Because of limits of word length in that text, my discussion of space in the film was necessarily compressed, and I am grateful to Sid Gottlieb for giving me the opportunity to publish here this extended version.

5. Subsequently known as EUR (Esposizione Universale di Roma), this new district had been built in 1936–42 as a showpiece for the regime and to house an international exposition, intended to take place in 1942 but canceled because of the war. It was left as a ghost town in 1943–45, but in the 1950s it became central to the capital's postwar renovation. Once the new subway (opened in 1955) ran there from Roma Termini it developed as a commercial district and middle-class residential area and was one of the nuclei of the 1960 Olympics. This latter period of the district's development is recorded in Antonioni's *L'eclisse* (1962).
6. Peter Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 51.
7. The translation here is mine, from Michel de Certeau, *L'invention du quotidien*, 1: *Arts de faire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1980), p. 148. For the corresponding text in the English edition see *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated by Steven F. Rendall (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984).
8. On October 2, 1943, Albert Kesselring, commander-in-chief of the German army in southern Italy, announced that listening to radio stations other than those of the Germans, Fascists, and German-occupied territories was an offence punishable by imprisonment or a fine. In his diary entry for October 4, Carlo Trabucco commented: "I'm sorry to have to tell Marshal Kesselring that all of Rome listens to Radio Londra, and those who manage to pick up Radio Bari and Radio Palermo [stations broadcasting from the territory occupied by the Allies], which are heavily jammed, listen to them too." *La prigionia di Roma. Diario dei 268 giorni dell'occupazione tedesca* (Turin: Borla, 1954), p. 59.
9. Adriano Aprà, "Rossellini Beyond Neo-Realism," in *Roberto Rossellini*, ed. Don Ranvaud, BFI Dossier no. 8 (London: British Film Institute, 1981), p. 44.
10. I am drawing here on the important work of James Scott, who examines what he calls the "infrapolitics" of oppressed groups (on analogy with infrared: that part of the political spectrum invisible to the holders of power): "The undeclared guerrilla war that rages in this political space requires that we enter the world of rumor, gossip, disguises, linguistic tricks, metaphors, euphemisms, folktales, ritual gestures, anonymity." See *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), p. 137. Luisa Passerini, drawing on Bakhtin, has for her part stressed the importance of jokes, graffiti and satirical songs among subaltern groups living in Italy under the Fascist regime; see *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working Class* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

11. Paolo Monelli, *Roma 1943* (Turin: Einaudi, 1993), p. 284. On Radio Bari and Radio Palermo, see note 7 above.
12. Oral testimony by Fiorentini in Alessandro Portelli, *L'ordine è già stato eseguito. Roma, le Fosse Ardeatine, la memoria* (Rome: Donzelli, 1999), p. 152.
13. One of the putative real-life models for Manfredi was the Communist Celeste Negarville, who had grown up in Turin, where his father was a Fiat worker. In spring 1943, before the fall of Fascism, he reentered Italy from Paris clandestinely to help organize strikes against the regime and, in September 1943, he was elected PCI representative on the military council of the Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale and sent to Rome. Manfredi's non-Roman accent marks him out as belonging to the national leadership of the antifascist underground.

MICHAEL P. ROGIN

6 Mourning, Melancholia, and the Popular Front

Roberto Rossellini's Beautiful Revolution[1]

"She's ashamed of us because she says she's an actress while we're just poor working women," Pina (Anna Magnani) tells Manfredi (Marcello Pagliero) on their first encounter.[2] She is describing her sister, Lauretta (Carla Rovere), and the contrast between them introduces the series of binary oppositions that will structure *Roma città aperta* – theatricality versus reality; the elite versus the popular; the artificial versus the natural; Fascism versus the Resistance; Germans versus Italians; jazz and drugs versus communism and Catholicism; sickness versus health; homosexuality versus heterosexuality. These moralizing polarities also drive the film's plot: Manfredi's former lover Marina (Maria Michi) is Lauretta's friend, and Lauretta and Manfredi are in Marina's apartment when Marina makes the phone call that betrays him.

Contemporary reviewers in Italy, France, and the United States mostly heralded Rossellini's film of the Italian Resistance as a revolutionary breakthrough: "the first great resistance film to come out of Europe – perhaps the best picture Italy has ever made," "the classic of our generation," "the greatest film I have ever seen."[3] For viewers half a century later, however, the list of antinomies with which I began is likely to discredit itself as it unfolds, the later terms undercutting the legitimacy of the earlier ones. The critic for the Communist *New Masses* may have rejoiced that "the homosexuality of the immaculately booted and uniformed torturer is posed in inevitable defeat against the solid masculinity of his opponent."[4] But those who see the film for the first time today are more likely to wonder why

Rossellini (casting the homosexual actor Harry Feist as Gestapo agent Major Bergmann) lined up Nazis with the homosexual decadence that was one of their targets, why the Gestapo drug supplier Ingrid (Giovanna Galletti) who seduces Marina into revealing Manfredi's whereabouts is a lesbian femme fatale. Such questions will produce others: Why are the (German) villains mannered and the (Italian) heroes natural? Why have Italian Fascists all but disappeared from the film? Does Rossellini really mean to endorse Manfredi's puritanical sermon to Marina against the Nazis' own targets – sex, drugs, and jazz – the lecture that drives her to betray him? If today's viewers share the political sophistication of those rare original Americans who were not swept off their feet, they may also find endorsements of institutional hierarchy and the leadership principle (Communist Party, Catholic Church, patriarchal family) hidden behind the apotheosis of the people, even if they do not go all the way with the American novelist and Trotskyist James T. Farrell and damn *Rome Open City* as a Stalinist film.[5] And they are likely to end up bewildered that Italian neorealism, supposedly conceived in opposition to Hollywood melodrama, could have as its founding film one organized around the melodramatic combat between good and evil.

The one opposition on which *Rome Open City* does not insist, however, is that between realism and melodrama. Acknowledging the melodramatic narratives of many neorealist films, André Bazin performed the splitting operation himself, extruding neorealist plots from the films' attention to immediate experience and "actual day-to-day events," their creation of what he called "image-facts." Narrative versus spectacle was about to become the most famous binary in film theory; inverting it, Bazin made the antispectacular undercut the hackneyed narratives by revealing the world anew.[6]

Neorealism's most important contemporary advocate, Bazin remains the best critic of the new style of film on the phenomenological level, but he gets the relationship between plot and image in *Rome Open City* exactly backwards, for it is plot that opens up the new visual world. Instead of trying to rescue the authentic visual feel of the film from its story, realism from melodrama, it is better to see how the latter enabled the former. Luchino Visconti's *Ossessione* (1943), the other candidate for the film that founded neorealism, is also a plot-driven melodrama. But whereas *Ossessione* laid claim to

reality through the underworld by way of American hard-boiled fiction and the Hollywood crime melodrama (which gives it a family resemblance to what would later be called film noir), *Rome Open City*'s counter-Hollywood offered up the lived experience of the wartime Resistance and the Popular Front. By undergirding the movie's image-facts, its politics made *Rome Open City* "widely regarded as the most important film in Italian cinema history,"[7] the ground zero for neorealism.

But what were the motion picture's politics, and how do they translate into film form? Those questions are thrown into sharp relief from the perspective of the United States – because of the enthusiastic American reception; the importance of Hollywood as the point of comparison; the contrast between neorealism and its American Left contemporary counterpart, the tendency that Thom Anderson has labelled *film gris*;[8] and finally because of the looming Cold War. We will, therefore, begin and end in the United States. The paradox is this: a melodramatic splitting that buried native Fascism, stigmatized sexual deviance, and lined up American popular culture with Nazism, created on the other side of its great divide not a falsified, triumphalist ideal Italy but a loved and mourned world of concrete objects and tender human interactions. The historical and psychological sources of that achievement, ending with the return of the repressed, will be our subject.

* * *

American critical reception, mostly enthusing over *Rome Open City*'s political melodrama, made content the basis for the film's innovative form. The *New York Times*'s Bosley Crowther praised "the first film yet seen hereabouts to dramatize the nature and the spirit of underground resistance in German-held Europe in a superior way – with candid, overpowering realism and with a passionate sense of human fortitude." Admiring "the devotion of the people to a basic ideal of life," Crowther contrasted the "sharply realistic and deeply compassionate quality" of a film whose "cast was composed of random people found suitable for the roles," with "the slickly manufactured sentiments of Hollywood's studio-made pictures." Emphasizing the Resistance story, *Life* featured *Rome Open City* as its "Movie of the Week." As no foreign import competing with Hollywood had

ever done, the film set the New York record for longest consecutive-running motion picture; entering its seventieth week at the World Theater, it had far surpassed the opening runs of such all-time Hollywood moneymakers as *Birth of a Nation, The Ten Commandments, The Jazz Singer*, and *Gone with the Wind*. *Paisan* (1946) enjoyed even greater critical and commercial success in the United States, quickly becoming the top-grossing foreign film to date. When Rossellini arrived in 1949 to meet the top Hollywood box office female star, Ingrid Bergman, who wanted to make a motion picture with him, the *New Yorker* called him "probably the best movie maker of our time."[9]

Since Rossellini's and Vittorio De Sica's immediate postwar films were welcomed as antifascist by the American Left, the contrast with contemporary movies made by Hollywood progressives remains telling. This corpus is split (sometimes, as in *Crossfire* [directed by Edward Dmytryk, 1947], within the same picture) between what Siegfried Kracauer called "terror" and "message" films, and for both diseased types, as he saw it, Rossellini's Resistance movies provided the antidote. A few months after *Rome Open City* opened in New York – *From Caligari to Hitler*, arguing that Weimar cinema prefigured the Nazi triumph, was about to appear – Kracauer worried that "Hollywood's terror films" "reflect[ed] an American state of mind" in which "the weird, veiled insecurity of life under the Nazis is transferred to the American scene." Opening up the territory later mapped as film noir, Kracauer called attention to movies in which "the panic which in the [wartime] anti-Nazi films was characterized as peculiar to the atmosphere of life under Hitler now saturates the whole world." His point of comparison was *Rome Open City*. For "with an uninhibited realism generally foreign to similar Hollywood productions," it depicted a struggle in which "human dignity is practiced, not merely proclaimed; and even though the resistance leaders are hopelessly doomed, the vital power of their convictions wears down Nazi morale." The heroes win in the American films, by contrast, but "their victories are pure cloak-and-dagger acts that leave the enemy's ideological defenses intact." In compensation for the malaise they actually show, Kracauer argued, these films typically produce a character who "recite[s] as if by rote a eulogy of the democratic life and of the brave new world to come."[10]

These same hortatory speeches, which "reveal the profound weakness of the very cause for which they try to enlist sympathy," were also Kracauer's target two years later, in an essay on "Hollywood's message films." This time his point of contrast to American "ideological fatigue" was "one of the greatest films ever made," *Paisan*. "Instead of championing causes," wrote Kracauer, "*Paisan* renders the fragile manifestation of human dignity with a simplicity and a directness that makes them seem as real as the hard facts of war."[11]

One need not uncritically endorse Kracauer's valuations to understand where they were coming from. For Rossellini's masterpiece is at once more openly political and less self-consciously mannered than contemporary films made by those facing the Hollywood blacklist. Take the single example of the Mark Hellinger/Jules Dassin/Albert Maltz pseudodocumentary *The Naked City* (1948), whose title and metropolis-as-character (New York instead of Rome) pay homage to Rossellini's motion picture (which was released in the United States simply as *Open City*). Whereas ordinary lives and location shooting are the simple givens of *Rome Open City, The Naked City*'s self-conscious voice-over insistently calls attention to them. Urban panoramas in the American film lay claim to bird's-eye objectivity; their distancing mechanism is absent from *Rome Open City*, save, as we shall see, for the final shot. Like the other *film gris* of beleaguered Hollywood leftists, whatever political subversion *The Naked City* may contain is smuggled in through the crime melodrama genre rather than operating as open political address. Made under Fascism, *Ossessione* more closely anticipates postwar Left Hollywood than does *Rome Open City*.[12]

It was not just entrenched Hollywood power that distinguished *Rome Open City* from its American counterparts, but the contrasting political situations in postwar Italy and the United States. For if the anxiety Kracauer saw on screen did not foreshadow American fascism (as he and others on the Left feared), these "maladjusted texts" did anticipate the fate in store for the political tendency of those who made them: extinction.[13] The Popular Front was under siege in the postwar United States just as it achieved its Italian apotheosis.

Initiated in response to the Nazi seizure of power in Germany, the Communist Party's Popular Front strategy rejected revolutionary

internationalist working-class anticapitalist struggle (the position still orienting Farrell's review of *Rome Open City*) in favor of a broadly inclusive national fight against Fascism. The Popular Front aspired to include liberal reformers, white-collar workers and state employees, small property-owners, progressive capitalists, and (in Italy) the lower Catholic clergy. With the overthrow of Mussolini, the Italian Resistance organized itself on a Popular Front basis. *Rome Open City* is its movie.[14]

Popular Front antifascism in the United States emerged in support of the New Deal; after the bitter hiatus of the Stalin-Hitler Pact, its adherents patriotically enlisted behind the government war effort. In Italy, by contrast, the Popular Front operated oppositionally and underground. Bazin himself had linked neorealist "revolutionary humanism" to "political revolution, Allied occupation, economic and social upheaval, [to the Italian] liberation [that] came slowly through endless months." Whereas the United States was never occupied, and, wrote Bazin, a liberated France could return to its past political freedom, the Italian Resistance was creating something new. *Rome Open City* brought it to the screen.[15]

The Resistance instantiated a radical phenomenology of existence, the intensity of immediate risk. Under its sway, people no longer experienced "the 'sad opaqueness' of a private life centered about nothing but itself," as Hannah Arendt quotes René Char, a gulf between "the weightless irrelevance of their personal affairs" and "'the world of reality.'" "Stripped of all masks," "he who 'joined the Resistance, *found* himself.'" No longer a "'carping, suspicious actor of life,' . . . he could afford 'to go naked.'"[16] For Rossellini himself, whose film career had blossomed under Fascism, contact with the Resistance was tantamount to a conversion experience.[17] But there was an enabling disjunction between radically transformed daily life under the Resistance and moderate Resistance politics, the politics of the Popular Front. In the space opened up by that mismatch, *Rome Open City* was born.

Writing a generation later, from the more radical perspective of the Italian New Left, Mario Cannella argued that the neorealist counterposition of humanism to ideology was simply another ideology, the ideology of the Popular Front. Because the original enthusiasts for *Rome Open City* shared its inclusive antifascist politics, they saw

authenticity where viewers not under its historical spell are more likely to see a tendentious point of view. What passed for humanism in *Rome Open City*, argued Cannella, was actually populist nationalism. Offering an alternative Italy to that of operatic bombast and overblown Fascist rhetoric (the contrast is explicit in *Ossessione*), *Rome Open City* depicts the street life of the popular quarter, and the apartment built around an inner courtyard and invaded by aliens from outside. Rossellini and his writers interlocked two of the separate stories modeled on actual Resistance episodes so that Communist militant and local priest collaborate to defend their people against the German assault. Such a scenario, according to Cannella, buried native Fascism, capitalism, and papal hierarchy, the state, class, and church enemies within. Those old structures haunted Bazin's neorealist cinema of rebirth; they would return to rule the country as the war ended, and to promote a new departure that Bazin had not anticipated, the Italian capitalist economic miracle. Postwar Italy may have undergone the "most profound social revolution in the whole of its history," but it was counter to the revolution that Bazin was seeing on screen. Neorealism is the filmic expression of those few short years, 1945–1951, of Popular Front hope shadowed by, anticipating, and experiencing loss.[18]

Arguing that antifascist class collaboration was hidden "under the banner of love and brotherhood," Cannella was harking back to Karl Marx's analysis of the French Revolution of 1848. In the "*beautiful* revolution" of "fraternity" and "universal sympathy" – 1848 in France and all over Europe, 1943–45 in Italy – nations were reborn by expelling their ruling alien powers. But just as in 1848, the fraternal dream of February, "the brotherhood of opposing classes, one of which exploits the other," was destroyed by class struggle – the suppression of the workers' uprising in June – so *Rome Open City*'s beautiful revolution would give way to Italy's counterrevolutionary version of what Marx had called the "*ugly* revolution": the Communist concessions that did not prevent the splitting of the trade union movement and the 1947 expulsion of the Communists and Socialists (PCI and PSI) from government, the 1948 CIA-subsidized Christian Democratic election victory, the perpetuation of Fascist institutions and state personnel, the purge of former partisans from government employment, the return of judicial and agrarian reaction, and the

triumph of a corrupt capitalism that impoverished and dislocated some Italians as it advantaged others.[19]

The beautiful revolution "existed only as a phrase, only in words," wrote Marx; "realities have taken the place of words" in the ugly revolution.[20] But consigning *Rome Open City* to the side of beautiful rhetoric against ugly life, reversing the film's own self-understanding, can account neither for its new look nor for the excitement that greeted it. And Cannella intended not to discredit neorealism, but to establish the political conditions of its possibility.

For those who thought that *Rome Open City* marked a revolutionary break in cinema were not wrong – even if the film had its conventional stretches, and its reality effect came from breaking old filmic codes and substituting new ones rather than from an actual closer approach to the real.[21] From the opening shots that abruptly put viewers in the old woman's apartment and on the Roman roofs, to the unmediated transitions from one scene to another, to the sharp-angled view down from Pina's apartment building onto the German soldiers seizing the street, to the cutting back and forth as Pina chases the truck taking Francesco (Franceso Grandjacquet) away that culminates in the camera shot on the truck that seems to come out of the receding machine gun that kills her – one of the most famous shot assemblages in all cinema history – we are not in Hollywood any more.

If neither enchanted humanist nor disenchanted (Farrellian or Cannellan) Marxist accounts recapture the historically situated newness of *Rome Open City*, there is another Marxist perspective on neorealist origins that claims to do just that, one that recurs not to the revolutionary Marx of 1848 but to the radical Antonio Gramsci imprisoned under Italian Fascism. "Neo-realism was the first attempt of our culture to attain a 'national-popular' expression in the sense meant by Gramsci," wrote Guiseppe Ferrara in 1965. *Rome Open City* became the founding Italian neorealist film, in this view, by exemplifying Gramsci's project for creating a national-popular culture – even though the prison notebooks themselves were only published between 1948 and 1951 and had yet to enter into postwar cultural debate. Against Fascist imperialist nationalism, with its sporadic efforts to enlist the people in the state's "national struggle" for a "New Empire," *Rome Open City* made the people and their local leaders

themselves its collective hero. Exemplifying Gramsci's organic intellectuals, Manfredi and Don Pietro (Aldo Fabrizi) are not presented as disciplined agents carrying out the commands of their hierarchical institutions, the Communist Party and the Catholic Church, even if the political militant fits that description better than the local priest. Rather, both men at once belong to and are organizationally distinct from the people they serve, and together they link the struggle for national liberation to a redemptive Italian future. Neorealism "is the existence of a popular art in Italian culture," declared the filmmaker Guiseppe De Santis in 1949. It represents "the second *Risorgimento* in Italy, the story of a people struggling to become a modern nation." Neorealism is "the expression of a new, national, popular, progressive spirit," claimed the Communist theoretician Umberto Barbaro. Italian cinema is motivated by two conditions, Gianni Puccini wrote in 1948, that it is popular and that it is national. "This work was begun (or rather re-begun) with the overthrow of fascism, which signalled also the overthrow of everything un-Italian or anti-Italian in it."[22]

But the affirmative rhetoric of Barbaro's and Puccini's national-popular is tone-deaf to Rossellini's film and to the movement it spawned. For when the Popular Front made a beautiful revolution in Italy, it gave neorealism flesh by turning Gramsci upside down. Whereas Gramsci imagined his national-popular in the service of a long-term progressive future, *Rome Open City* makes visual poetry from defeat. Defeat, whose multiple dimensions in *Rome Open City* we are going to examine, is the condition of the film's revolutionary visual perspective, its love for the fragile, endangered object world.

Three fundamental differences distinguish the project Gramsci imagined from the one initiated in *Rome Open City*, differences involving the spread of the national-popular, its role in the long and the short term (Gramsci's war of position and war of maneuver), and the failure or success of the political perspective. Clarifying these contrasts will allow us to understand the politics of the film more precisely. First, Gramsci's national-popular (his model was France) spread a collective national consciousness where one did not heretofore exist. The *Risorgimento* had unified Italy without bringing forth a national culture that unified the peninsula and incorporated the popular classes. In Gramsci's cultural synthesis of Stalin's nationalist socialism in one country and Trotsky's permanent revolution in a

backward society, creating a national cultural community remained the task of the Left. The shared experience of a national-popular culture, its new ways of comprehending the social world, would join together northern workers and southern peasants, broad sectors of the middle strata, and party, church, and state functionaries. Because cultural artifacts were to be enlisted in a nation-building project, it was insufficient to depict the popular world according to some Gramscian imperative; widespread circulation and reception was a defining criterion. *Rome Open City* may have been nationally popular – contrary to Rossellini's later mythmaking, it was the top-grossing Italian film of 1945–46[23] – but this first was also the last neorealist film to do that job. Neorealism quickly became art and not popular cinema, and the reason it failed its Gramscian function speaks to the contradiction between its long-term perspective and the immediate political struggle in which it was caught up.

Gramsci had put national-popular culture in the service of the gradual penetration of civil society, what he called a war of position, whereas neorealism emerged in the context of a short-term contest for political power, Gramsci's war of maneuver. Historically, as Cannella insists and as the jailed Gramsci knew, the experience of recent defeat was at the origin of the Popular Front. The celebratory rhetoric of its populism-in-one-country disguised the tendency's origins out of revolutionary losses – the Fascist conquest of Italy to which Gramsci's cultural politics was a response and the Nazi triumph in Germany that gave birth to the Popular Front. Emerging after the failure of the workers' factory seizures in the aftermath of World War I – amid "the false phrases of street oratory," a Genoese Communist worker remembered, "we managed to chatter our way to Fascism"[24] – the Communist leaders' cultural turn spoke to the problem of hegemony in civil society, the consciousness that would need to be changed before the conquest of state power. Gramsci understood the defensive posture of the Popular Front, and his "pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will" is etched on Manfredi's face (Fig. 20). Nonetheless, for Gramsci the national-popular cultural project, operating over the long term, looked forward to the penetration of civil society.

PCI head Palmiro Togliatti, who had access to Gramsci's unpublished prison writings, insisted on fighting a war of position from 1943 to 1948. "It'll be a long fight. We've hardly started," Manfredi

20. Manfredi. (*Rome Open City*, frame capture)

tells Francesco. Rossellini, no Marxist, believed in broad inclusion rather than internal civil conflict. *Rome Open City*, however, actually participated in a war of maneuver, and the short-term outcome of that struggle would determine the Italian future. But whereas Gramsci imagined that the war of maneuver would take the form of revolutionary upheaval, *Rome Open City* brought national-popular politics, not class struggle, to the immediate contest over political power. Neorealist "populist romanticism," as P. Adams Sitney quotes Pier Paolo Pasolini, was part of a "vital crisis," not a "complete reorganization of culture." Popular Front Communist Parties subordinated the goals of social transformation and (except in Spain) the conquest of political power in favor of nation-building reform. They underestimated the political obstacles to their vision. And so, in the third and most decisive departure from the Gramscian prognosis, the political perspective offered up in Rossellini's masterpiece went down to defeat.[25]

"American culture demands victory," wrote Robert Warshow. "Rossellini neither requires nor dreams of victory; indeed, it is only defeat that has meaning for him. . . . From this hopelessness . . . Rossellini gains his greatest virtue as an artist: the feeling for particularity."[26] Although the American critic was responding to

Paisan, his perception illuminates what is usually taken to be its more hopeful predecessor, *Rome Open City*. In spite of the contrast between the Popular Front's power in liberated Italy and its weakness in the United States, Kracauer understood that what distinguished the Italian director's Resistance films from their American counterparts was not his optimism versus their pessimism but rather the openness of his camera as opposed to the overcompensating disjunction between hortatory verbal and claustrophobic visual messages in the American films. For when the beautiful revolution of "universal sympathy" actually came to the Italian screen, it arrived not enjoying the optimistic "airy existence" of Marx's February 1848, but embodied in love and mourning.[27] And that set the mood for Italian neorealism. The great De Sica and Visconti films (*Shoeshine* [1946], *Bicycle Thieves* [1948], and *Umberto D* [1951]; *La terra trema* [1948]), disclose a society internally riven; but Rossellini's Resistance films had first politically to unify the nation in the intensity of a suffering-enhanced love of life.

Rome Open City represses the internal forces that would overwhelm its vision; they return in its somber mood. Contrast Rossellini's motion picture with the Resistance film that did not found neorealism, the 1945 Popular Front documentary, *Days of Glory*.[28] Although the two films share political perspectives, they are diametrical opposites in plot, visual syntax, and atmosphere. *Rome Open City* may have had a documentary feel; *Days of Glory* was almost entirely assembled from documentary footage, some shot for the movie and the rest taken from (primarily American) newsreels. But shooting and cutting for collective dramatic impact, on the Soviet model, and supported by a voice-over narrative written by Barbaro, the film's four directors put the Communist theoretician's version of the "national, popular, progressive spirit" on screen. One of those directors, the writer Marcello Pagliero, would play Manfredi in Rossellini's film; the others, all in the general orbit of the Italian Communist Party, were Visconti, De Santis, and Mario Serandrei (who had edited *Ossessione* and would go on to cut *La terra trema* and *Rocco and His Brothers* [1960]). It was as if (to reverse the order in which the films were made) Manfredi had survived *Rome Open City*, participated in Resistance uprisings in the northern Italian urban centers, and gone on to make *Days of Glory*.[29]

Like *Rome Open City, Days of Glory* counterposes a rhetorical Fascism to an antifascist popular reality. Both films dwell on Resistance martyrdom. But as the opening lines of the *Marseillaise* that give *Days of Glory* its title insist – "Allons enfants de la Patrie, le jour de gloir est arrivé" ("Onward, children of the fatherland, the day of glory has arrived") – that film can begin with and dwell on defeat because it charts a trajectory towards victory. Early scenes of Resistance martyrdom and extended attention to the Nazi massacre in the Ardeatine caves outside Rome (to which I will return) give way to Resistance uprisings, to popular and legal justice against the perpetrators of the Ardeatine massacre, to Allied/partisan unity in the liberation of Italy, and to the beginnings of the physical rebuilding of the country. Cannella's incredulity at "the mystifying role of the working class playing the leading role in national reconstruction," the perspective of the Italian Communist Party, could well be a commentary on the closing images of *Days of Glory*. They make visible a productivist political rhetoric (in the name of antirhetoric) that is absent from Rossellini's film.[30]

Whereas *Days of Glory* counterposes "marionette" Nazi marching soldiers to mobilized Italian fighting men, *Rome Open City* contrasts a dissolute German military to ordinary Italians in their living and working places. Rossellini's film focuses on individuals in relationship, not masses in action. And its dominant images, both visually and in their narrative role, all shock as violent defeat: Pina's murder, Manfredi's torture, and Don Pietro's execution crush the Resistance by eliminating the motion picture's three central characters.

Like *Rome Open City, Days of Glory* sets the Italian nation against its Nazi occupiers. But its word for the enemy world view, "Nazi-fascism," incorporates the Italian Fascism excised in Rossellini's film. *Days of Glory* can find a place for native Fascism because, by giving the Italian Resistance exaggerated credit for the liberation of the country, it makes Italian antifascism triumphant. The springtime national insurrection in the North climaxed the Italian Resistance, and (along with the 1944 mass strikes in the North and spontaneous land occupations in the South), it surely helped supply neorealism with the courage of its convictions. When Francesco assures Pina that "Spring will come,"[31] – the phrase that will give neorealism its "Springtime in Italy" label – he could be prophesying those spring insurrections

(which occurred before the editing of the film and the addition of sound). But within the movie, he is speaking vaguely of a long-term future that he cannot put into words. While the Resistance lifts *Days of Glory* to its triumphant apotheosis, it keeps the neorealist canon down on the ground.

By climaxing with Resistance victory, *Days of Glory* creates space for one of the worst Nazi atrocities in Italy, the spring 1944 massacre in the Ardeatine caves. This mass execution of ten Italians for every one of the thirty-two German military police blown up by Roman partisans traumatized the Roman Resistance, and was one reason why, of the five largest cities on the Italian mainland, Naples, Genoa, Turin, and Milan rose up against the Germans and Rome did not.[32] *Days of Glory* puts the Ardeatine caves massacre at its center, and devotes to it more screen time – the discovery, identification and removal of bodies, the testimony of women who lost their husbands and sons (filmed by Pagliero), and the trial and death of the responsible Roman Fascist police chief, Pietro Caruso (filmed by Visconti) – than to any other single event.

Caruso was prosecuted by the future head of the PCI, Enrico Berlinguer, and we witness his courtroom victory and Caruso's execution. But the form of Caruso's punishment unsettles the end of *Rome Open City*. For non-Italian viewers at least, sitting Don Pietro facing backward in a chair and shooting him in the back has stood for half a century as the exemplar of Nazi brutality (Fig. 21); in *Days of Glory* that method of execution signals not popular martyrdom but political justice, for Caruso and prison chief Pietro Koch are executed the same way.[33] More significantly (since it speaks unambiguously to the film's intentions), Rossellini and his scenarists transformed the Roman commissioner of police from a Fascist ideologue, the figure of sinister, ravaged power captured by Visconti's camera, into a ridiculous sycophant (Carlo Sindaci) who simply does German bidding. Playing no role in Manfredi's capture rather than a major one in mass murder, the single culpable Italian in *Rome Open City* is the exception who proves the nationalist rule of Italian heroes and German villains.[34]

Although the Resistance ambush that frees Francesco may well have been based on the action for which the Ardeatine cave massacre was the revenge, and although the Gestapo commandant in

21. Don Pietro's execution. (*Rome Open City*, frame capture)

charge of the massacre was the model for the film's Major Bergmann, the massacre itself is invisible on Rossellini's screen. This springtime in Rome a year before the springtime in Italy functions instead as the structuring absence for *Rome Open City*'s story and its mood – not simply because it helped convert Rossellini to the Resistance, but also because it gave birth to that conversion experience as mourning.[35]

This "paean to Italian defeat," then, whose offscreen starting point goes back to Popular Front origins, is most immediately generated from the Ardeatine cave massacre. The film's sensibility also foreshadows Italy's future. As Rossellini and Sergio Amidei were graphing out and getting ready to shoot *Rome Open City*, Resistance leaders signed the Protocols of Rome (December 9, 1944) that subordinated the Resistance to Allied military authority and disbanded the partisan groups. The gestapo major within the movie predicts the politics happening outside it, what the historian Paul Ginsborg calls "the substantial political defeat of the Resistance." Major Bergmann identifies Manfredi as the Communist leader of the Popular Front Committee of National Liberation that had allied itself with the reactionary "Badogliani generals." "Tomorrow, when Rome is occupied, or liberated as you people say, will these monarchist army officers still be

your allies?" the Nazi asks Manfredi. He hardly speaks for the film's hopes for the future, but he names its fears. That same winter, the British abandoned the Po Valley Resistance, the backdrop for the final story of *Paisan*; in the spring, the Allies disarmed the partisans and dissolved the workers' councils. To be sure, the film was still in production during the springtime uprisings that drove the Nazis from Genoa, Turin, and Milan. But if the Italian future was still open in 1945, the Resistance permeates *Rome Open City* not only as an alternative to Italian wartime defeat but also as its continuation.[36]

Opened up and seen anew, Rossellini's Rome is a city pushed beyond defeat to devastation. "Are we beggars? Let us show our rags to the world. Are we defeated? – we shall look disaster in the face. . . . Our confession will light up our crazy secret strengths, our belief in life, our superior Christian brotherhood," proclaimed the filmmaker Alberto Lattuada in 1945.[37] Without Lattuada's bravado of victimization, *Rome Open City* grounds itself on Italy as the object (not the maker) of war. "Do these Americans really exist?" asks the policeman who had winked at Pina at the bread riot. She responds by gesturing with her head and eyes to the ruined buildings around her. "It looks that way," she says offscreen, as a subjective camera from her point of view pans over a bombed out building.[38] By contrast with *Naked City*'s New York, its phallic skyscrapers objectively displaying metropolitan power, Rome is a ravaged city opened up by bombing and foreign invasion.

"In 1944, immediately after the war, everything was destroyed in Italy," Rossellini wrote a decade later. "It was this situation which permitted me to embark on work of an experimental nature." Making reference near the end of his life to "those twenty years of Fascism that ended with the great drama of the war," the director explained that "*Open City* and *Paisan* were . . . [the] fruit of something that had been much stronger than us and had overwhelmed, crushed, and implicated us. Once the balance sheet had been drawn up, perhaps we could start with a fresh page."[39]

Implicated indeed. Fascism was the original national-popular project behind Gramsci's, the one Rossellini had to disown. Mussolini had broken with Italian Socialism to pursue nationalist reunification – through geographical expansion and popular mobilization – during the First World War and its aftermath. If "Fascist low culture

was essentially diversionary," Victoria de Grazia writes, nonetheless Fascist planners early in the regime and young intellectuals during the Ethiopian campaign called for a militant "unifying national culture." That was the Fascist dream that culminated and ended in World War II.[40]

Rome Open City is shadowed, moreover, not only by Mussolini's version of popular nationalism, but also by Rossellini's life under Fascism, first as a drug-taking playboy whose lover was a German actress, and then as an increasingly successful filmmaker. As Italy suffered, Magnani had also prospered, in music halls, secondary film roles, and through her marriage to the Fascist director Goffredo Alessandrini, under whom Rossellini worked in his first feature film. (Celebrating an air force pilot in the Ethiopian invasion, *Luciano Serra, pilota* [1938] was scripted by Vittorio Mussolini, the dictator's son and the head of the Italian film industry.)[41]

The men who would become neorealist directors and scenarists, whatever their politics, had virtually all worked in the Fascist film industry (there was no other), and even where the Fascist past is not present in their postwar films (as it is in *Shoeshine* and *Bicycle Thieves*), their nontriumphalism pays homage, so I think, to this historical complicity. Peter Brunette has shown that the first film of Rossellini's antifascist trilogy remade the last film of his Fascist armed forces trilogy (one film for each branch of the service), *The Man of the Cross* (1943). With Fascism replacing Communism as the ideological enemy and the left-wing Amidei replacing a Fascist ideologue as the screenwriter, as one martyred priest/fighter couple takes the place of another, and with Rossellini's brother Renzo's music on both sound tracks, the second film achieved its greatness not by mirroring but by making reparation for the first. The Italian Fascism repressed from the content of *Rome Open City* returns in its sober *mise-en-scène*. Bazin rightly saw a revolutionary film movement born from Fascist defeat, but its special qualities stem from also making that defeat its own.[42]

Elevating the Magnani working-class persona from secondary figure (as in the 1942 comedy *Campo de' fiori*) to star, and replacing Alessandrini as her lover, Rossellini was emancipating himself and his film from Fascism. He and Magnani, hardly anonymous in 1945, were thereby making common cause with the "random people" Bosley Crowther saw on screen. Yet Rossellini's Rome does not rise in glory

from the director's extrusion of Italian Fascism and from his oedipal triumph over Alessandrini, for that would have not only blocked out the contaminated immediate Italian past but also echoed the national-popular rhetoric of Mussolini. "You Italians, whatever party you belong to, are all addicted to rhetoric," Bergmann tells Manfredi, using the word associated with Italian Fascism. By refusing to talk, Manfredi redeems Italy as substance not rhetoric; his silence also, so says Bergmann, would make an Italian as good as a German and deny the difference between slave and master races. "What would be the meaning of our struggle, then?" – as if Germany and Italy had not fought on the same side.[43]

Insofar as it queers its Nazis to exculpate Italy, *Rome Open City* occupies what psychoanalytic theorist Melanie Klein calls the paranoid position, for it preserves its ideal object by projecting sadistic violence outside. The German/Italian confrontations in Gestapo headquarters descend to the level of bad melodrama, culminating in the cringing withdrawal of the Germans from Don Pietro's malediction. But the result on the other side of the split is not an overblown imperial ideal, for the extruded Nazis leave behind a Roman *mise-en-scène* that, subtextually making reparation for Italian complicity, occupies what Klein called the depressive position.[44]

The depressive position should not be confused with melancholia. Its sadness comes from relinquishing the dream of (here Fascist) omnipotence, acknowledging a loved, endangered world outside the imperial self. Reparation is made for a war directed against good objects in which the self (here Rossellini's Italy) is now acknowledged to have participated (though not in the film's plot). Melancholia in the Freudian tradition, by contrast, signals unacknowledged aggression against an idealized lost object of desire, aggression taken inside and turned against the self. The animate and inanimate object world in the modality of melancholia is as dead as the ego. Melancholia permeates Antonioni's *Il Grido* (1957) and his great films that followed, films that Rossellini did not like and that are alien to his sensibility. Whereas Antonioni is the visual poet of melancholia, Rossellini gives us what P. Adams Sitney has rightly called mourning. Neorealism may "mourn the loss or the impossibility of an imaginary Italy," as Sitney writes, but never have lost ideal objects been more filled with on-screen life. Like the neorealist films to follow, *Rome Open City*

achieves the "'anthropomorphic' cinema" Visconti had imagined in 1943 of "living men *among* things."[45]

Francesco cannot find words to tell Pina his hopes for the future because Rossellini, unlike the makers of *Days of Glory*, cannot find forward-looking images. The present is liberated instead, the value in freshly seen ordinary life, unprotected and uninsulated, at the moment it is most under threat – whether in the initial conversation between Pina and Manfredi, the bond between Pina's son Marcello and Francesco, or Don Pietro's tender relationship to sacred and profane dangerous objects – the soccer ball, the books filled with money, the frying pan, the bomb.[46] Rossellini's major protagonists and his image-facts – the relations of people to one another and to the object world – are supported by what he valued as *coralità*, which signifies both chorus and love.[47]

"I *began* by putting the accent on the collective above all," Rossellini wrote in 1953. "War and the resistance are collective actions by definition." The Resistance of 1943–45 brought a "new era of collective action" to Italy, Paul Ginsborg writes. Family loyalty and collective action pulled against each other in Italy's past and future (one theme of Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers*); *Rome Open City* captures the moment of their mutual support, with family expanded to include children conceived out of wedlock and blessed by a priest who takes street confession in the midst of his Resistance work. As Luigi Chiarini put it in 1950, "Shared suffering and common danger contributed to engender a deeper consciousness of social solidarity and a perception that the fate of each person was linked with the fate of society as a whole." So *Rome Open City* was the "expression of the collective soul called society." "The artist," writes Cannella, "tries under the impulse of great collective suffering (the war) and deep moral urges, to overcome class contradictions in a communion of love." But (to quote Chiarini again), "After 1948, the involution began. The country slowly reorganized itself in accordance with the old structures." So in Visconti's *La terra trema* (1948) the chorus (as the voice-over and as the villagers) will withdraw its support from the hero; in Rossellini's *Stromboli* (1949), the disjunction between alien heroine and the "narrow-minded incomprehension" (as Rossellini called it) of the island chorus will become the subject. These films register Popular Front defeat. The withdrawal of *coralità* leaves "egotism"

22. Pina's death. (*Rome Open City*, frame capture)

as the theme of Rossellini's Bergman trilogy (*Stromboli, Europa '51* [1952], *Voyage in Italy* [1953]); De Sica's and Fellini's word would be "loneliness." Instead of criticizing Rossellini's involution from popular solidarity to female isolation, his concentration on the woman abandoned, left alone, and on the edge of a nervous breakdown, we should understand it as responding to history. The bombed out Berlin of *Germany Year Zero* (1948) forms the bridge.[48]

Paisan's mourning may turn into melancholia in *Germany Year Zero*. Certainly there is nothing so bleak in all Rossellini's corpus as the suicide that ends the war trilogy (where the final shot of a woman's exhausted body alongside of, but not touching, the dead boy retracts the inverted pietà of Marcello cradling Pina [compare Figs. 22 and 23]).[49] But most critics see *Rome Open City* ending on the opposite note. Was not Rossellini drawing up a balance sheet and starting a fresh page, as he put it thirty years later, placing the martyrdom of his three major characters in the service of Italian rebirth rather than prophesying Popular Front defeat? Is that not the meaning of the movie's final shot, with the protective dome of St. Peter's towering over the open city and the small boys who will inherit it?

Pushing themselves up against the fence that separates them from Don Pietro, and whistling a Resistance song for him and his

23. Edmund's death. (*Germany Year Zero*, frame capture)

executioners to hear, the boys of Pina's apartment building sag (in close-ups) after he is shot. Two by two they take one another's hands in front of the withdrawing camera. As it follows their slow arm-in-arm walk back toward Rome, St. Peter's dome appears in the distance (see Fig. 12). It rises above the rooftops in the near distance, with the boys growing ever smaller and beginning to disappear down a hill.

An enormous crowd converged on St. Peter's Square the day after the American liberation to thank the pope for saving Rome. By brokering an agreement between the Allies and the Nazis to protect the Vatican and keep the fighting out of Rome, Pope Pius XII had made it what was called an "open city," available to Rossellini's camera. Because Rome was not the scene of battle between opposing armies, *Rome Open City* could apotheosize the local, make room for the Roman people to live, breathe, and die. Ignoring the pope's silence during the round-up and deportation of Roman Jews, not yet cognizant of papal sponsorship of conservative Christian Democracy, Rossellini may have offered up his final shot as gratitude (for the Rome that was spared and for its movie), and as promise.[50]

Most viewers at the time and ever since have wanted to take that perspective, so that the sacrifice of each major Resistance figure leaves another behind, culminating in the children. From another

perspective, however, the final shot of *Rome Open City* predicts the end of neorealism in the years after Christian Democracy achieved its Cold War Italian ascendancy. Perhaps Rossellini meant his title to extend to the concluding image, pointing to an open future for the boys left behind. Certainly the last shot is more ambiguous than *Paisan*'s partisans sinking underwater, and it lacks the despairing finality that finishes *Germany Year Zero*. Nonetheless, it offers neutral sadness rather than any principle of hope. For the Rome papally protected as an open city was actually exposed, the film shows, to German penetration.[51] What might it mean, then, for San Pietro to replace Don Pietro at the end?

Abandoning the film's visual method, the final shot suggests an old return more than a new beginning. The camera is among the Roman rooftops at the opening, bringing us immediately into the intimate life of the popular quarter. Priests live there, not popes. In the long view given when the film is over, Rome's fate will be determined not by the national-popular from below but by distant forces from above and far away. From that perspective, St. Peter's dwarfs the small boys caught under its embrace. They are whistling in the dark.

* * *

"Do the Americans really exist?" Pina's policeman friend had asked her. *Rome Open City* answered that question by marginalizing the United States as another alien invader, creating a Roman popular alternative to the decadence of Nazi politics and American mass culture. But this Popular Front antifascism, Rossellini's beautiful revolution, was losing out to an American-led Cold War political reorganization in which antifascism issued forth not in Catholic/communist unity (communist replacing fascist totalitarianism) but in Catholic/American anticommunism. Rossellini would meet his nemesis, therefore, in the United States, haunted by the Italian Fascist decadence whose repression had given birth to his film.

When Ingrid Bergman wrote Rossellini that it was "as if you were there" to watch *Rome Open City*, and offered to make a movie with a man she had never met, she set in motion the most notorious scandal since Hollywood's early years. This ideal of female virtue – "the

pin-up girl of millions: Hollywood's sweetheart," as Senator Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado described her – would soon leave her husband and daughter for Rossellini, the father of her illegitimate child. Johnson condemned the two "apostles of degradation" for their "assault upon the institution of marriage," and their "direct challenge to the family unit as the basis for our civilization." "By very long odds my own favorite actress of all time," Johnson confessed, "one of the most powerful women on earth" had now become "a powerful influence for evil." Splitting the ideal from the degenerate Bergman, the Senator blamed Rossellini for her ruin. "No one can reflect upon her sudden plunge from the highest pinnacle of respect to the gutter without feeling that she is the victim of some kind of hypnotic influence," he lamented.[52]

Johnson chaired the Interstate Commerce Committee, whose report warned against the danger of foreign subversion – "the mental food which is being fed by foreign powers" – in American films. The committee proposed a "sense of the Senate" resolution that films "by totalitarian-minded movie men should be banned from interstate commerce." Although the resolution condemned the blacklisted Hollywood Ten, just beginning to serve their time in jail, the dangerous influence on whom it focused, and the only one to whom it gave a proper name, was Rossellini. Now the alien menace was coming from Italy not, as in *Rome Open City*, to it. As the *New York Times* explained, the Interstate Commerce Committee "singled out Rosselini [sic] for scathing attack as a fascist, narcotics addict, mental patient, and wartime lover of a Nazi actress." "Rosselini [sic] Is Branded a Fascist by the Senate," headlined the *Times*, twice misspelling the name (perhaps a sign of guilt by free association to Mussolini) that it had known and loved so well less than a year earlier.[53]

Sounding uncomfortably like Manfredi in his lecture to Marina, Senator Johnson was casting his "moral outlaws" Rossellini and Bergman as the director's own sexually perverse couple, as if drug supplier Ingrid and Gestapo chief Bergmann (the coincidence of names is uncanny) had exercised their hypnotic influence to seduce Ingrid Bergman. After appearing as the virtuous wife of a Resistance leader in *Casablanca* (1942), in *Notorious* (1946, the year she saw *Rome Open City*) Bergman played a Nazi's daughter who proves by marrying a Nazi scientist at the behest of American Intelligence that she is a

patriot and not what the Cary Grant character suspects her of being, a "tramp." The actress had wanted to be Anna Magnani on film; taking Magnani's place in life, she fell instead under the shadow of the Ingrid and Bergmann motion picture characters.[54]

Johnson could not stop the release of Howard Hughes' version of *Stromboli*, though his outrage at how the film displayed Bergman was no greater than Rossellini's at how Hughes had butchered his film. A few months later, New York (where *Rome Open City* had set its attendance record) banned as blasphemous Rossellini's film *The Miracle* (1948, his last with Magnani), in which a peasant girl imagines St. Joseph is the father of her illegitimate child. For the pregnant, unwed Pina of Rossellini's inclusive Popular Front family to metamorphosize into those two other unwed mothers, Bergman in life and Magnani on film, opened the director to his own charge of decadence. The Catholic Legion of Decency and Cardinal Francis Spellman of the New York Archdiocese condemned *The Miracle*, the city tried to close it down, pickets and counterpickets appeared at its showings, and the controversy continued for well over a year. First reversed on appeal, this "Catholic censorship" (as the *New Republic* called it) was reinstated by the New York Supreme Court because *The Miracle* destroyed "the sacred relationship" between Christ, Mary, and Joseph by "associating it . . . with drunkenness, seduction, mockery, and lewdness." Film noir heroes meanwhile, unable to mourn the death of the wartime Popular Front, were responding to family sentimentality and Cold War paranoia with melancholia. Although the United States Supreme Court overturned *The Miracle* ban on the grounds that the New York law forbidding "sacrilege" was unconstitutionally vague (thereby extending free speech protection to motion pictures for the first time), and although Johnson's effort to ban foreign films whose makers were guilty of "moral turpitude" did not result in legislation, the man the *New Yorker* had called in 1949 "probably the best movie-maker of our time" became the next year the first and only motion picture director in American history unanimously to be condemned by the Senate of the United States. Rossellini had joined the blacklisted filmmakers and other targets of the Cold War Red Scare. The United States may have welcomed his beautiful revolution, but it was now suppressing an ugly revolution without having had either one.[55]

NOTES

1. This essay grows out of the 1998 Townsend Center for the Humanities graduate seminar, "Italian Neorealism and Marxism," at the University of California, Berkeley, taught jointly with T. J. Clark, with students from art history, film studies, Italian, and political science. Consider this the last, and not the best, of the seminar papers. I am particularly grateful to the research assistance of one of those students, James Casas Klausen, who assembled the primary materials on the American reception of Rossellini and offered indispensable commentary on an early draft. The readings of Elizabeth Abel, Ann Banfield, Sidney Gottlieb, Hannah Pitkin, and Paul Thomas have also been important for the final version. Kathleen Moran, my coworker on a project on American Popular Front cinema, supplied the images.
2. The subtitle translates the Italian *artista* as *actress*. The translation of film dialogue in Roberto Rossellini, *The War Trilogy: Open City, Paisan, Germany Year Zero*, ed. Stefano Roncoroni, trans. Judith Green (New York: Grossman, 1973), p. 25, gives the word *artist*, which does not convey in English that Lauretta is a cabaret performer. All subsequent dialogue, however, will be quoted from this edition.
3. *Rome Open City* opened in New York on February 25, 1946. I quote from Genêt [Janet Flanner], "Letter from Rome," *New Yorker*, Dec. 1, 1945, p. 88; Joseph Foster, "Rome of the Resistance," *New Masses*, March 9, 1946, p. 29; Henrietta Buckmaster, letter to the *New York Times*, April 28, 1946, Section 2, p. 3.
4. Foster, "Rome of the Resistance," p. 28.
5. James T. Farrell, "The Problem of Public Sensibility," *New International*, August 1946, pp. 183–88. James Agee was convinced by Farrell that "the film is among other things Communist propaganda. I don't enjoy this fact; but that cannot prevent me thinking 'Open City' the best movie of its year and one of the best and most heartening in many years." Agee's ambivalence was atypical. See James Agee, "Movies in 1946," *The Nation*, 164 (January 25, 1947), p. 87, and "Films," *The Nation*, 163 (April 13, 1946), pp. 443–44 [reprinted in this volume, pp. 167–70].
6. André Bazin, "An Aesthetic of Reality: Neorealism," in *What Is Cinema?*, vol. 2, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 20, 21, 37–38.
7. Peter Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 41.
8. Thom Anderson, "Red Hollywood," in *Literature and the Visual Arts in Contemporary Society*, ed. Suzanne Ferguson and Barbara Groseclose (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1985), pp. 183–91.
9. A. H. Weiler, "Notes and Comments," *New York Times*, June 9, 1946, Section 2, p. 3; *New York Times*, "Record," December 22, 1946, Section 2, p. 5; Sergio Amidei, "'Open City' Revisited," *New York Times*, 16 February, 1947, Section 2, p. 5; "Runs, Hits, No Errors," *New York Times*, June 29, 1947, Section 2, p. 5; Bosley Crowther, "How Italy Resisted," *New York Times*, February 26, 1946,

p. 21 [reprinted in this volume, pp. 306–09]; Bosley Crowther, "'Open City'," *New York Times*, March 3, 1946, Section 2, p. 1 [reprinted in this volume, pp. 161–64]; "Movie of the Week: *Open City*," *Life*, 23 (March 4, 1946), pp. 111–17; "Talk of the Town: Rossellini," *New Yorker*, February 19, 1949, p. 25. On Bergman and Rossellini, see Tag Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini: His Life and Films* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), p. 255.

10. Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), and "Hollywood's Terror Films," *Commentary*, 2 (August 1946), pp. 132–34.
11. Siegfried Kracauer, "Those Movies with a Message," *Harper's*, 196 (June 1948), pp. 568, 571, 572.
12. P. Adams Sitney, *Vital Crises in Italian Cinema: Iconography, Stylistics, Politics* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), p. 5, compares the neorealist look with that of contemporary Hollywood films. On film noir as the cinema of a Hollywood left under siege, see Anderson, "Red Hollywood," pp. 183–91; James Naremore, *More than Night: Film Noir in Its Contexts* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), pp. 96–135; and Richard Maltby, "*Film Noir*: The Politics of the Maladjusted Text," *American Studies*, 18 (1984), pp. 49–71.
13. See Maltby, "*Film Noir*," pp. 49–71.
14. Meyer Schapiro first identified the Popular Front politics of the film in his response to James T. Farrell; see "A Note on 'The Open City,'" *New International*, December 1946, pp. 311–13. On the uneasy alliance among various political tendencies within the Italian Resistance, see Paul Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943–1988* (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 39–71.
15. Bazin, "An Aesthetic of Reality," pp. 16–17, 21.
16. Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, enlarged ed. (New York: Viking, 1968), pp. 3–4. See also Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Attack of the Blob: Hannah Arendt's Concept of the Social* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 109.
17. Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 38, 42.
18. Mario Cannella, "Ideology and Aesthetic Hypotheses in the Criticism of Neo-Realism," *Screen* 14 (Winter 1973/74): 5–60 (originally published in Italian in 1966); Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy*, p. 1. See also Sitney, *Vital Crises*, pp. 1–10.
19. Cannella, "Ideology and Aesthetic Hypotheses," p. 34; Karl Marx, "The Class Struggles in France: 1848–1850" [1850], in *Surveys from Exile*, ed. David Fernbach (New York: Vintage, 1974), pp. 57–61, emphasis added; Ginsborg, *History of Contemporary Italy*, pp. 42–52, 76–120.
20. Marx, *Class Struggles*, p. 60.
21. See Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 53–58.
22. Guiseppe Ferrara, "Neo-realism: Yesterday," and Guiseppe De Santis, "In Defense of the Italian Cinema," in *Springtime in Italy*, ed. David Overbey (Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1978), pp. 202, 218; Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, eds. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith

(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 196–385. Barbaro and Puccini are quoted in Cannella, "Ideology and Aesthetic Hypotheses," pp. 40–41. On the Fascist state and popular culture, see Victoria de Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), quoted on pp. 221–22.

23. Mira Liehm, *Passion and Defiance: Film in Italy from 1942 to the Present* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 62–63; Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, p. 52.
24. Quoted in Ginsborg, *History of Contemporary Italy*, p. 82.
25. For Gramsci, neorealism, and Italian politics 1945–48, see Cannella, "Ideology and Aesthetic Hypotheses"; Ginsborg, *History of Contemporary Italy*, pp. 42–120 (pp. 45–46 on Gramsci and Togliatti); Sitney, *Vital Crises*, pp. 1–2; and Chris Caes, "'In the Realm of the Most Complete Liberty': Class, Anthropomorphism, and Agency in Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers*," unpublished seminar paper, University of California at Berkeley, 2000. Manfredi's words are quoted from Rossellini, *War Trilogy*, p. 111.
26. Robert Warshow, "*Paisan*," in *The Immediate Experience* (New York: Doubleday, 1962), pp. 255–56.
27. Marx, *Class Struggles in France*, p. 60.
28. On *Days of Glory*, see Liehm, *Passion and Defiance*, pp. 60–62. The discussion here is also heavily indebted to a conversation with Mira Liehm, January 8, 2001, shortly after I saw the film for the first time.
29. Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 109–10.
30. Cannella, "Ideology and Aesthetic Hypotheses," p. 26.
31. Rossellini, *War Trilogy*, p. 69.
32. Ginsborg, *History of Contemporary Italy*, p. 53.
33. Mira Liehm has confirmed my own sense of the shock value of the form of Don Pietro's execution, and therefore the double shock of seeing it repeated by antifascists in *Days of Glory*. Franco Moretti (in personal conversation) suggests, however, that for Italian viewers the shock would come from watching an Italian patriot finished off as if he were an enemy of the people, for he remembers thinking "Traitor!" at the moment of Don Pietro's killing.
34. Compare Sitney, *Vital Crises*, on the departure of the Don Pietro story from its model: "Although an Italian finished off the execution of the historical Morosini and an Italian betrayed him to the Gestapo for seventy thousand lire, the fictional representation reimagines these events to stress the Germanization of evil in the film" (p. 37).
35. Rossellini, Amidei, and Alberto Consiglio conceived the plot of *Rome Open City*, agreeing they wanted to avoid huge horrors like the Ardeatine cave massacre, while having lunch one block from the spot of the resistance action that precipitated it. The film divides that action, giving the bomb explosion to the boys and the killing of the German military police to Manfredi and his partisans. See Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 118–19, and on Gestapo commander Herbert Kappler as the model for Bergmann, p. 123.

36. Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, quoted on p. 179, pp. 113–61; Ginsborg, *History of Contemporary Italy*, quoted on pp. 57–58, pp. 63–69; Rossellini, *War Trilogy*, pp. 125, 141.
37. Quoted in Cannella, "Ideology and Aesthetic Hypotheses," p. 35.
38. Rossellini, *The War Trilogy*, p. 18.
39. Roberto Rossellini, "Ten Years of Cinema," in *Springtime in Italy*, p. 93, and "The Intelligence of the Present," *War Trilogy*, p. xvi.
40. For seeing Fascism as the original national-popular, I am indebted to a conversation with Franco Moretti. See also de Grazia, *Culture of Consent*, quoted on p. 223, and David Forgacs, "National-Popular: Genealogy of a Concept," in *Formations of Nation and People* (London: Routledge, 1984), pp. 83–98.
41. On Rossellini under Fascism, see Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 47–55; Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 26–27, and Peter Bondanella's essay in the present volume.
42. Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 31–32. See also Ara Hagop Merjian, "Fascism, Memory, and the Architectonics of Alienation in De Sica's *Ladri di biciclette* (1948), and Antonioni's *L'avventura* (1959)," unpublished seminar paper, University of California at Berkeley, 2000.
43. Rossellini, *War Trilogy*, pp. 126, 135–36. Bergmann speaks in German; his word "Kampf" is translated as "struggle" in *War Trilogy*, but "war" in the subtitle on screen.
44. Melanie Klein, "A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Manic-Depressive States" (1935), and "Mourning and Its Relation to Manic-Depressive States" (1940), in *The Selected Melanie Klein*, ed. Juliet Mitchell (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986), pp. 115–74.
45. See Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1953–74), 14: pp. 239–58; James Casas Klausen, "'To Strive, to Seek, . . . and Not to Yield': or, What Does Italian Neo-realism Desire?" unpublished seminar paper, University of California at Berkeley, 1998; Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 406, 525; Merjian, "Fascism, Memory, and the Architectonics of Alienation"; Sitney, *Vital Crises*, p. 13; and Luchino Visconti, "Anthropomorphic Cinema," in Overbey, *Springtime in Italy*, p. 84 (italics in original). The family resemblance between melancholia and Marx's understanding of alienation in its bourgeois modality could be the subject of another essay. See Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Tucker, 2nd ed. (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 70–81.
46. Aldo Fabrizi was a music hall comic, but the humor of his relation to objects could not be more different from his aggressive performance in *Totò Against the Four* (1963), which "reprises (or rather satirizes) his role in *Open City*, as a priest not to the underground but to the underworld," or from Totò's own handling of inanimate objects in his first film (made under Fascism), *Hands Off Me* (1937). I am indebted for the chance to see these movies to the University of California, Berkeley, Pacific Film Archive Totò retrospective,

and to the liner notes of Judy Bloch in *PFA Film Notes*, January/February 2001, quoted on p. 12.

47. *Coralità* resembles Julia Kristeva's *chora*, the "nourishing and maternal" presymbolic modality for which Kristeva references Plato and Melanie Klein. See Juliet Kristeva, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, trans. Margaret Waller (New York: Columbia University, 1984), pp. 25–28.
48. Rossellini, "A Few Words about Neo-realism," in *Springtime in Italy*, p. 89 (italics in original); Ginsborg, *History of Contemporary Italy*, pp. 2–3, 21; Luigi Chiarini, "A Discourse on Neo-Realism," in *Springtime in Italy*, pp. 144, 156; Canella, "Ideology and Aesthetic Hypotheses," p. 43; Rossellini, "Why I Directed *Stromboli*," in *My Method: Writings and Interviews* (New York: Marsilio Publishers, 1992), pp. 28–30; Vittorio De Sica, "Analyzing 'Umberto,'" *New York Times*, October 30, 1955, Section 2, p. 5; Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, p. 441. Although the two national cinemas look very different, the shift from group solidarity in American World War II platoon motion pictures to the isolated men of film noir parallels the similar shift within neorealism.
49. Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, p. 86. That mourning and melancholia are the relevant categories for *Germany Year Zero* is clear not just from the film but from Rossellini's dedication "to the memory of my son Romano" (the name is not an accident), whose recent sudden death had devastated him. See Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 207–12, 242–46.
50. See Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 115–16, 179.
51. Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, p. 42.
52. Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini*, pp. 257–58; *Congressional Record*, 81st Congress, Second Session, 96, Part 3, March 14, 1950, 3281–88 (Johnson quoted 3284, 3285, 3286).
53. *Congressional Record*, 81st Congress, Second Session, 96, Part 3, March 14, 1950, 3284–85 (quoted 3284), Part 10, August 23, 1950, 13205–06; "Rosselini [sic] Is Branded a Fascist by the Senate," *New York Times*, August 24, 1950, p. 15.
54. By making her feel she was "there" in the Resistance, *Rome Open City* had discontented Ingrid Bergman with the falsity of her saintly Hollywood image. What could have been her response to seeing that her name was divided between the two Nazi villains, and that the two Ingrids shared a general physical resemblance?

    As for Johnson's supposition that Bergman was suffering from "that dreaded mental disease schizophrenia as a personality disorganization leading to a retreat from reality into fantasy wherein thinking is confused and emotion is incongruous," it may have inspired the words of the psychiatrist who institutionalizes the Bergman character in *Europa '51*. (One of the Senator's briefs against Rossellini was that he had been "twice incarcerated in a mental institution.") After he called "Rosselini" – the *New York Times* was still misspelling the name – a "scoundrel" at a Roman cocktail party in October, the director sued him for slander; see "Director Sues Johnson," *New York Times*, October 12, 1950, p. 41.

55. "The Censor," *Time*, 57 (January 8, 1951), p. 72; "Catholic Censorship," *New Republic*, 124 (January 29, 1951), p. 7. The controversy over *The Miracle* can be followed in the *New York Times*, often on page 1. Giant Cold War headlines ("Senate Unit Votes to Reject Jessup as Delegate to UN," October 19, 1951; "Big Three and Bonn Sign Peace Compact; West Germany Made Allied Partner; Reds Tighten Zonal Border as Reply," May 27, 1952) typically dominate the front page, with *The Miracle* controversy providing a running subtext.

Reviews of *Open City*

OPEN CITY

Bosley Crowther

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"How Italy Resisted," February 26, 1946

It may seem peculiarly ironic that the first film yet seen hereabouts to dramatize the nature and the spirit of underground resistance in German-held Europe in a superior way – with candid, overpowering realism and with a passionate sense of human fortitude – should be a film made in Italy. Yet such is the extraordinary case. "Open City" ("Citta Aperta"), which arrived at the World last night, is unquestionably one of the strongest dramatic films yet made about the recent war. And the fact that it was hurriedly put together by a group of artists soon after the liberation of Rome is significant of its fervor and doubtless integrity.

For such a picture as "Open City" would not likely be made under normal and established conditions. In the first place, it has the wind-blown look of a film shot from actualities, with the camera providentially on the scene. All of its exterior action is in the streets and open places of Rome; the interior scenes are played quite obviously in actual buildings or modest sets. The stringent necessity for economy compelled the

producers to make a film that has all the appearance and flavor of a straight documentary.

And the feeling that pulses through it gives evidence that it was inspired by artists whose own emotions had been deeply and recently stirred. Anger, grim and determined, against the Germans and collaborationists throbs in every sequence and every shot in which the evil ones are shown. Yet the anger is not shrill or hysterical; it is the clarified anger of those who have known and dreaded the cruelty and depravity of men who are their foes. It is anger long since drained of astonishment or outrage.

More than anger, however, the, feeling that flows most strongly through the film is one of supreme admiration for the people who fight for freedom's cause! It is a quiet exaltation, conveyed mainly through attitudes and simple words, illuminating the spirit of devotion and sacrifice. The heroes in "Open City" are not conscious of being such, nor are the artists who conceived them. They are simple people doing what they think is right.

The story of the film is literal. It might have been taken from the notes of any true observer in occupied Europe – and, indeed, is said to have been based on actual facts. It is the story of an underground agent who is cornered by the Germans in a certain quarter of Rome and who barely escapes them until he is informed upon by his own girl friend. In the course of his flight he necessarily involves his resistance friends: a printer of an underground newspaper, his wife-to-be and her small son, and a neighborhood priest who uses his religious office to aid freedom's cause. The woman is killed during a raid on an apartment, the captured resistance leader is tortured to death and the priest is shot when he refuses to assist the Germans with any information.

All these details are presented in a most frank and uncompromising way which is likely to prove somewhat shocking to sheltered American audiences.

Yet the total effect of the picture is a sense of real experience, achieved as much by the performance as by the writing and direction. The outstanding performance is that of Aldo Fabrizi as the priest, who embraces with dignity and humanity a most demanding part.

Marcello Pagliero is excellent, too, as the resistance leader, and Anna Magnani brings humility and sincerity to the role of the woman who is killed. The remaining cast is unqualifiedly fine, with the exception of Harry Feist in the role of the German commander. His elegant arrogance is a bit too vicious – but that may be easily understood.

From "A Powerful New Film from Italy Points a Line of European Approach," March 3, 1946

. . . And now there comes from Italy a screen drama of tremendous power in which the techniques of realism – and the attitudes – are shatteringly employed. The film is called "Open City" ("Citta Aperta"), and it was made in Rome by a group of Italian film people shortly after the city was set free. The producers were obviously anti-Fascist and anti-Nazi in sympathy. The cast was composed of random people found suitable for the roles. The settings were regular buildings and the streets and open places around Rome. The film was recently imported to this country and is now showing at the World.

To us who have been accustomed to the slickly manufactured sentiments of Hollywood's studio-made pictures, the hard simplicity and genuine passion of this film lend to its not unfamiliar story the smashing impact of a shocking exposé. And its sharp estimation of realities gives it a rare intellectual authority. For the story itself is not notorious (except in its startling details); it is in its sincerity and candor that it achieves the illusion of reportage.

It tells the story of an underground resistance during the Nazi occupation of Italy, with a leader of the resistance as the central character and a Catholic priest as his immediate aide. During the course of a two-day hideout in a workers' quarter of Rome, the resistance leader is likewise assisted by an underground printer, the latter's wife-to-be and by various others of the community who have his interest at heart. In the end, however, he is informed on by his girl friend, who is a weakling and a dope addict, subtly cultivated by a woman agent for the Nazi SS. He is tortured to death by the Nazis in their frantic quest for information, and the priest, who is captured with him, is executed because he, too, will not talk.

This bare outline cannot possibly convey the drama and emotion in the film or its brilliant illumination of human qualities. The devotion of the people to a basic ideal of life is a theme which is dominantly stated by visual evidence, without high-sounding words. And the horrible depravity and cruelty of the Nazi-minded is most vividly revealed. Truly, the slice of life that is marked off and created in this film is an "inferno" of recent realities, and it could never have been invented in more "tragic, grotesque or apocalyptic terms."

Much more could be said about this picture – about its deep, genuine moral tone, achieved through an honest demonstration of conflict between the spirit of humanity and selfishness. (Incidentally, the fact that

the censors passed the film here in New York, with a few cuts, considering its frankness, was a step toward enlightenment, at least.) We might also mention the beautiful, the truly poetic, concept achieved at the end of the film when the priest is being executed and a group of his youngsters, who have had their own resistance group, gather outside the execution ground and whistle the resistance song. The shrilling of wild birds in the treetops could not more gloriously manifest freedom and hope.

But we have said all we can now about it – without mentioning the members of the cast, all of whom (with one logical exception) are fine, albeit unknown. All that remains is to comment upon the woeful disparity between the honest compassion in this picture and the mawkish self-concern in some of Hollywood's new films – such a one as "Tomorrow Is Forever," now showing at the Winter Garden. If you contrast the two you realize how dramatically effete our boys can be – and perhaps you may pause to wonder what this reveals about ourselves.

A TALE OF ONE CITY

John Mason Brown

Reprinted from the *Saturday Review of Literature*, vol. 29, no. 14 (April 6, 1946), pp. 16–18. Reprinted by permission of *The Saturday Review*, © 1946, General Media International, Inc.

"God! Was I happy to see America again!" He was a young Texan; at first sight, the kind of boy you would expect to see as a contestant in any rodeo. He was thin, tanned, scraggly; a healthy extrovert, you would have said, until you noticed that his face wore an expression of pain which refused to quit when he laughed. He had the cowboy look, even if driving a Fort Worth taxi did happen to be his job.

He had been a paratrooper; a proud member of the proud 101st Airborne Division. He had seen the works – in the air and on the ground. For three months he had been a German prisoner. The wretched gruel he had forced himself to eat had cost him his teeth. He had been beaten badly, too, on the head and back, and had his left hand crushed, for showing his Texan independence by spitting in a German officer's face. His description of the fear which had possessed him every time he had had to jump from a plane; of the broken legs and fractured arms his friends had sustained when they, also, had jumped; and of the boys he had known who were shot in the air or when they landed in trees, was something to freeze the blood.

"Yes, sir, I was goddamn glad to get back. Twenty-one months is too long a time. But comin' back wasn't easy. This country don't know a damn thing about the war, 'n seems to care less.

"Why, do you know," he asked, and the smile faded from his face, "when our troop ship came in, we anchored right off Coney Island. 'N guess what they were doing there? They had one of those World's Fair parachute machines set up, 'n hundreds of people were paying good money to take jumps on it – jus' for the fun of it; jus' to giggle and shriek – when we hadn't had any fun jumpin' at all. Can you beat that? That was my first view of home, 'n it made me mad."

I could not help thinking of this young Texan when, the other afternoon in the midst of New York's comfort, I dropped in to see "Open City." For this Italian film, dealing with Rome during the German occupation, is the most eloquent and pulverizing proof the motion-pictures have yet set before us of how different for civilians was the world of war that Europe knew from the one that we knew here.

"Open City," may I quickly point out, is not a documentary. Yet it gives the illusion of being one. Its anguishes do not appear to have been tricked up for the screen. They seem as genuine as if, by coincidence, an appalling sequence of events had just happened to take place in orderly narrative fashion before the newsreel cameras. The picture leaves us feeling, not as if we had been listening to dialogue, but as it we had eavesdropped on the actual speech of mortals tested almost beyond mortal endurance.

There is melodrama. Plenty of it. It is of that lurid, Jean Valtin kind in which Hollywood would revel for purely cinematic reasons. In "Open City," however, this melodrama is part of the film's accuracy as coverage of that most monstrous of all melodramas – war itself. It is sprung from the actualities an invaded nation was forced to survive rather than from the contrivance a scenarist was free to imagine. In peaceful California this tale of the Underground's struggle with the Nazis would have been told in Dietrich and von Stroheim terms. In war-torn Italy its characters wear no make-up except the mascara of human misery.

The studio touch is, for the most part, blessedly missing. Street scene follows street scene in which the people act like people, not actors. Even the central figures – the Catholic priest; the Communist leader; his actress-sweetheart, whose love of luxuries leads her to betray him; the printer for the Underground, and his proletarian fiancée who is shot down by the Germans on the night before she was to be married – all of these manage to behave so naturally that one is never allowed to realize that they are also performing.

This constant sense of the candid camera at work is, of course, an illusion, skillfully created and maintained to contribute to both the power and illusion of the film itself. Yet it is the product of more than the art which conceals art. It is the expression of artists who have something far beyond mere showmanship on their minds and in their hearts.

The Italian studio which made the picture was not merely turning out a film. It was recording the agony of a city; the horror that was Rome when, with death, starvation, and disease as their companions, her people lived under the blight of the German terror and faced the barbarism of Nazi torture chambers.

This cross-section of what Rome endured is suggested in terms of the families who dwell in flats [in a building where] the Resistance is strong; of the cellars and back rooms of that building in which the workers of the Underground labor; and of the rooftops over which they escape, when the street outside is suddenly filled with German troops.

The heroes of "Open City" are a Communist leader, and a priest who does not realize until late in the picture that his partner in the Resistance belongs to the anti-Catholic "Reds." The two men work together in spite of the cleavage in their hopes and points of view. The one is concerned with this world; the other with the next. The threat of Nazism unites them, making them forget their differences and bringing out what is noblest in each.

Both of them are aware, as their German captor is not, that beyond physical prowess there is moral grandeur. And both of them possess it. Each dies without revealing the secrets he knows; the Communist after facing manifold tortures, including having a blowtorch applied to his throat; the priest when he is strapped to a chair before a firing squad. They die as heroes but without heroics. They meet death as thousands of average men in and out of uniform did during the war years. Because of their ability to die as they do, our faith in man's living is renewed.

"Open City," however, is too true a film to be concerned only with nobility. It is much too close to the hungers, deprivations, and cruelties of conflict not to recognize that the frail are made frailer by war's testing no less surely than the strong gain an unsuspected strength. In depicting these human weaknesses the film goes its way without false underscoring, precisely as it does when courage is its theme. Its interior scenes of family life, even its closeups, seem unposed. They are casual; above all, honest. We are hardly ever aware of professional actors, only of men, women, and children, suffering, hating, hoping.

A proof of the picture's skill and a measure of its integrity is the performance given by Aldo Fabrizi as the Catholic priest. One only has to

think how Hollywood would have sentimentalized the part and dunked it in glamour to understand from what it is that Fabrizi spares us. He is not a handsome man. His is a plain face. Yet it is full of wisdom; lined by life. His goodness comes from within; so does his acting. He is a priest – any good parish priest – such as might be encountered anywhere in Italy, going quietly about his duties. Like Anna Magnani, who is so admirable as Pina, the proletarian fiancée shot down by the Germans, Fabrizi is one of the countless characters who appear to have been photographed without knowing it.

The truth is that for all people who knew the war only in this country and hence cannot be expected to imagine what civilians elsewhere endured, "Open City" should, I believe, be shotgun seeing. I suspect the young Texan paratrooper would agree with me. It is an agonizing but extraordinary film.

OPEN CITY

James Agee

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March 23, 1946

Recently I saw a moving picture so much worth talking about that I am still unable to review it. This was the Italian *Open City*. For the moment I can say only that I am at once extremely respectful and rather suspicious of it, and that I recommend it very highly, with a warning however, to those who are particularly sensitive to scenes of torture. I will probably be unable to report on the film in detail for the next three or four weeks.

April 13, 1946

Open City is a story of underground resistance during the late phases of the German occupation of Rome. The heroes are an underground leader; a co-worker and friend of his who hopes to marry a widow, pregnant by him; a priest who, generally at great risk to himself, is eager to help all of them. The villains are an epicene Gestapo officer; his Lesbian assistant; and a rudderless young Italian girl, misled by dope, sex, poverty, and easy money into betraying the patriots. The widow is shot down in the street. The leader dies under torture, without denouncing his comrades. The priest, who has to witness the torture, does so without pleading with

the victim to give in and without ceasing to pray for his courage; then he is executed. The widow's lover survives; so does her eight-year-old son, who is active, with other children, in an effective underground of their own.

I have no doubt that plenty of priests, in Italy and elsewhere, behaved as bravely as this one. Nor do I doubt that they and plenty of nonreligious leftists, working with them in grave danger, respected each other as thoroughly as is shown here. I see little that is incompatible between the best that is in leftism and in religion – far too little to measure against the profound incompatibility between them and the rest of the world. But I cannot help doubting that the basic and ultimate practicing motives of institutional Christianity and leftism can be adequately represented by the most magnanimous individuals of each kind; and in that degree I am afraid that both the religious and the leftist audiences – and more particularly the religio-leftists, who must be the key mass in Italy – are being sold something of a bill of goods. I keep telling myself that the people who made the film were still moved to reproduce recent experience and were in no state of mind and under no obligation to complicate what they had been through; I recognize with great pleasure how thoroughly both the priest and the partisans are made to keep their distinct integrities; and the fire and spirit of the film continually make me suspicious of my own suspicions. Nevertheless, they persist; so I feel it is my business to say so. If I am right, as I hope I am not, institutions of both kinds are here, as so often before, exploiting all that is best in individuals for the sake of all that least honors the individual, in institutions.

One further qualifier, which I mentioned a few weeks ago, no longer applies; some especially close details of torture have been cut, with no loss I feel, considering the amount of backstairs sadism any audience is tainted with. I have another mild qualifier – *Open City* lacks the depth of characterization, thought, and feeling which might have made it a definitively great film.

From there on out I have nothing but admiration for it. Even these failures in depth and complexity are sacrifices to virtues just as great: you will seldom see as pure freshness and vitality in a film, or as little unreality and affectation among the players; one feels that everything was done too fast and with too fierce a sincerity to run the risk of bogging down in mere artistry or meditativeness – far less the WPA-mural sentimentality and utter inability to know, love, or honor people to which American leftists are liable. The film's finest over-all quality, which could rarely be matched so spectacularly, is this immediacy. Everything in it

had been recently lived through; much of it is straight reenactment on or near the actual spot; its whole spirit is still, scarcely cooled at all, the exalted spirit of the actual experience. For that kind of spirit there has been little to compare with it since the terrific libertarian jubilation of excitement under which it was all but inevitable that men like Eisenstein and Dovzhenko and Pudovkin should make some of the greatest works of art of this century.

Roberto Rossellini, who directed this film, and Sergio Amidei, the author and script writer, are apparently not men of that order of talent; but they are much more than adequate to that spirit and to their chance. They understand the magnificence of their setting – the whole harrowed city of Rome – as well as the best artist might and perhaps better, for though their film bristles with aesthetic appreciation and eloquence, these are never dwelt on for their own sake; the urgency of human beings always dominates this architectural poetry; nor are the human beings or their actions dwelt on in any over-calculated way. The raid on the bakery, the arrest of the priest and the partisan leader, the rescue of partisan captives, and a sequence during which all the inhabitants of a tenement are hauled down into a courtyard by a German searching party are as shatteringly uninvented-looking as if they had been shot by invisible newsreel cameras.

The scene which shows the violent death of the widow and the violent reaction of her son – in cassock and cotta – has this same reality, plus a shammed operatic fury of design which in no way turns it false. There are quieter scenes which I admire fully as much – a family quarrel, an apartment scene involving two men and two women, and a casual little scene between the underground leader and the widow in which anyone of even my limited acquaintance with underground activity will recognize the oxygen-sharp, otherwise unattainable atmosphere, almost a smell, of freedom. The performances of most of the Romans, especially of a magnificent woman named Anna Magnani, who plays the widow, somewhere near perfectly define the poetic-realistic root of attitude from which the grand trunk of movies at their best would have to grow; and the imitations of Germans seem better than our best imitations because they are more strongly felt and more poetically stylized. The picture is full of kinds of understanding which most films entirely lack, or reduce to theatricality. I think especially of the sizing-up look and the tone and gesture with which the Gestapo officer opens his interview with the newly captured, doomed partisan leader. In art only Malraux and Silone, so far as I know, can equal that in experienced, unemphatic astuteness.

Open City was made during the distracted months just after the Allies took Rome over. It was made on a good deal less than a shoestring; mainly without sets or studio lighting; on varying qualities of black-market film. All sound, including dialogue, was applied later. The author and director had a good deal of movie experience; nearly the whole cast was amateur. The result is worthless to those who think very highly of so-called production valyahs, and plenty of people in Hollywood and elsewhere will doubtless use that fact twice daily, like Mothersills. Others may find this one of the most heartening pictures in years, as well as one of the best. Not that anything it proves will come to them as a revelation. The Hollywood cameraman Karl Brown made his excellent, pitifully titled *Stark Love*, a story of Southern mountaineers, about twenty years ago, on about $5,000. And most of the great Russian films used amateur players – and surroundings – on budgets which would probably not pay for an American singing Western today. But plenty of people realize a point that many others will never understand and that there is no use laboring: some professional experience is exceedingly useful and perhaps indispensable, but most of the best movies could be made on very little money and with little professional experience. Judging by *Open City* they can be made a great deal better that way.

Filmography

The following listing of films directed by Roberto Rossellini is compiled from information in Peter Brunette, *Roberto Rossellini*, Peter Bondanella, *The Films of Roberto Rossellini*, and Tag Gallagher, *The Adventures of Roberto Rossellini: His Life and Films*, which sometimes differ in small details.

DAFNE (DAPHNE) (1936)

PRÉLUDE Á L'APRÈS-MIDI D'UN FAUNE (PRELUDE TO THE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN) (unreleased, perhaps unfinished) (1937)

FANTASIA SOTTOMARINA (A FANTASY OF THE DEEP) (1938)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Rodolfo Lombardi
Editing: Roberto Rossellini
Music: Edoardo Micucci
Producer: Incom/Esperia Films

IL RUSCELLO DI RIPASOTTILE (THE BROOK OF RIPASOTTILE) (1940)
Subject: Elisabetta Riganti
Photography: Rodolfo Lombardi
Music: Ugo Filippini
Producer: Excelsior Safa-ACI

LA VISPA TERESA (THE LIVELY TERESA) (probably unreleased) (1940)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Mario Bava
Editing: Roberto Rossellini
Music: Simone Cuccia
Producer: Scalera

IL TACCHINO PREPOTENTE (THE OVERBEARING TURKEY) (1940)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Mario Bava
Editing: Roberto Rossellini
Music: Maria Strino
Producer: Scalera

IL RUSCELLO DI RIPASOTTILE (THE BROOK OF RIPASOTTILE) (1941)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, Elisabetta Riganti
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Rodolfo Lombardi
Editing: Roberto Rossellini
Music: Umberto Mancini
Producer: Franco Riganti for Excelsior-Safa

LA NAVE BIANCA (THE WHITE SHIP) (1941)
Subject: Francesco De Robertis
Screenplay: Francesco De Robertis, Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Giuseppe Caracciolo
Editing: Eraldo Da Roma
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Piero Cavazzuti
Set design: Amleto Bonetti
Producer: Scalera Film and Centro Cinematografico del Ministero della Marina
Cast: Nonprofessional actors

UN PILOTA RITORNA (A PILOT RETURNS) (1942)
Subject: Tito Silvio Mursino (Vittorio Mussolini)
Screenplay: Michelangelo Antonioni, Rosario Leone, Margherita Maglione, Massimo Mida, Roberto Rossellini

Photography: Vincenzo Seratrice
Editing: Eraldo Da Roma
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Franco Robecchi
Set design: Virgilio Marchi, Franco Bartoli
Producer: Anonima Cinematografica Italiana
Cast: Massimo Girotti, Michela Belmonte, Gaetano Masier, and officers and men of the Italian air force

L'UOMO DALLA CROCE (THE MAN WITH A CROSS) (1943)
Subject: Asvero Gravelli
Screenplay: Asvero Gravelli, Roberto Rossellini, Alberto Consiglio, G. D'Alicandro
Photography: Guglielmo Lombardi, Aurelio Attili
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Set design: Gastone Medin
Producer: Continentalcine-Cines
Military adviser: Lieutenant Colonel D. U. Leonardi
Cast: Alberto Tavazzi, Roswitha Schmidt, Attilo Dottesio, Aldo Capacci, Doris Hild, Franco Castellani, Ruggero Isnenghi, Antonio Marietti, Piero Pastore, Marcello Tanzi, Zoia Weneda

DESIDERIO (DESIRE) (1943, unfinished; completed by Marcello Pagliero in 1946)
Subject: Anna Benvenuti
Screenplay: Rosario Leone, Roberto Rossellini, Diego Calcagno, Giuseppe De Santis; with additional material by Marcello Pagliero and Guglielmo Santangelo
Assistant director: Giuseppe De Santis (for Rossellini)
Photography: Rodolfo Lombardi (for Rossellini), Ugo Lombardi (for Pagliero)
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Producer: Sovrania Film/Societá Anomina Film Italiani Roma
Cast: Elli Parvo, Massimo Girotti, Carlo Ninchi, Roswitha Schmidt

ROMA CITTÁ APERTA (OPEN CITY) (1945)
Subject: Sergio Amidei, Alberto Consiglio
Screenplay: Sergio Amidei, Federico Fellini, Roberto Rossellini, Alberto Consiglio (not credited)
Photography: Ubaldo Arata
Editing: Eraldo Da Roma
Music: Renzo Rossellini

Sound: Raffaele Del Monte
Set design: Renato Megna, Mario Chiari (not credited)
Producer: Excelsa Film
Cast: Aldo Fabrizi, Anna Magnani, Marcello Pagliero, Francesco Grandjacquet, Harry Feist, Maria Michi, Giovanna Galletti, Carla Rovere, Joop Van Hulzsen, Alberto Tavazzi, Carlo Sindici, Vito Annichiarico, Nando Bruno, Eduardo Passarelli, Akos Tolnay

PAISÁ (PAISAN) (1946)
Subject: Sergio Amidei, with the collaboration of Federico Fellini, Alfred Hayes, Klaus Mann, Marcello Pagliero, Roberto Rossellini, Rod Geiger, Vasco Pratolini, and Padre Vincenzo.
Screenplay: Sergio Amidei, Federico Fellini, Roberto Rossellini, Vasco Pratolini (for the Florence episode), and Padre Vincenzo (for the Rome episode).
Assistant directors: Federico Fellini, Massimo Mida, E. Handamir, Annalena Limentani, Renzo Avanzo
Photography: Otello Martelli
Cameramen: Carlo Carlini, Gianni Di Venanzo, Carlo Di Palma
Editing: Eraldo Da Roma
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Ovidio Del Grande
Producer: Mario Conti and Roberto Rossellini for the Organizzazioni Film Internazionali, with the collaboration of Rod E. Geiger for Foreign Film Production
Cast: Episode 1 (Sicily): Carmela Sazio, Robert Van Loon, Benjamin Emanuel, Raymond Campbell, Merlin Berth, Mats Carlson, Leonard Penish, Harold Wagner, Albert Heinze, Carlo Pisacane. Episode 2 (Naples): Dotts M. Johnson, Alfonsino Pasca, Pippo Bonazzi. Episode 3 (Rome): Gar Moore, Maria Michi, Lorena Berg. Episode 4 (Florence): Harriet White, Renzo Avanzo, Gigi Gori, Gianfranco Corsini, Giuletta Masina, Renato Campos. Episode 5 (monastery): William Tubbs, Owen Jones, Elmer Feldman, and the Franciscan monks from the monastery at Maiori. Episode 6 (on the Po Delta): Dale Edmonds, Achille Siviero, Roberto Van Loel, Alan Dane. Voice-over: Giulio Panicali

GERMANIA ANNO ZERO (GERMANY YEAR ZERO) (1947)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, from an idea by Basilio Franchina
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Max Colpet, Carlo Lizzani
Photography: Robert Julliard

Cameramen: Emil Puet, Jacques Robin
Editing: Anne-Marie Findeisen (Italian version: Eraldo Da Roma)
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Kurt Doubrawsky
Set design: Piero Filippone
Producer: Roberto Rossellini and Alfredo Guarini for Tevere Film, in collaboration with Salvo D'Angelo Produzione-SADFI and Union Générale Cinématographique
Cast: Edmund Meschke, Ernst Pittschau, Ingetraud Hinze, Franz Krfiger, Erich Gühne, Alexandra Manys, Hans Sangen, Heidi Blänkner, Babsy Schultz-Reckwell, Barbara Hintz, Count Franz Treuberg, Karl Krüger

L'AMORE (LOVE) (1948)
Episode 1: **Una voce umana (The Human Voice)**
Subject: La voix humaine by Jean Cocteau
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Robert Julliard
Editing: Eraldo Da Roma
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Kurt Doubrawsky
Set design: Christian Bérard
Producer: Roberto Rossellini for Tevere Film
Cast: Anna Magnani

Episode 2: **Il miracolo (The Miracle)**
Subject: from a story by Federico Fellini
Screenplay: Tullio Pinelli, Federico Fellini, and Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Aldo Tonti
Editing: Eraldo Da Roma
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Kurt Doubrawsky
Producer: Roberto Rossellini for Tevere Film
Cast: Anna Magnani, Federico Fellini, the inhabitants of Amalfi and Maiori

LA MACCHINA AMMAZZACATTIVI (THE MACHINE TO KILL BAD PEOPLE) (1948)
Subject: Eduardo De Filippo, Filippo Sarazani
Screenplay: Sergio Amidei, Giancarlo Vigorelli, Franco Brusati, Liana Ferri, Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Tino Santoni

Special effects: Eugenio Bava
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Mario Amari
Producer: Roberto Rossellini and Luigi Rovere for Universalia/Tevere Film
Cast: Gennaro Pisano, William Tubbs, Helen Tubbs, Marilyn Buferd, Giovanni Amato, Joe Falletta, Giacomo Furia, Clara Bindi, and the inhabitants of Maiori, Amalfi, and Atrani

STROMBOLI, TERRA DI DIO (STROMBOLI, LAND OF GOD) (1949)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini and Sergio Amidei
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Art Cohn, with the collaboration of Sergio Amidei, Gian Paolo Callegari, Renzo Cesana, and Father Felix Morlion
Photography: Otello Martelli
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Terry Kellum, Eraldo Giordani
Producer: Berit Film-RKO
Cast: Ingrid Bergman, Mario Vitale, Renzo Cesana, Mario Sponza, and the people of the island of Stromboli

FRANCESCO GIULLARE DI DIO (THE FLOWERS OF ST. FRANCIS) (1950)
Subject: from a story by Roberto Rossellini, after *The Little Flowers of St. Francis* and *The Life of Brother Ginepro*
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Federico Fellini, with the collaboration of Father Félix Morlion and Father Antonio Lisandrini
Photography: Otello Martelli
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Renzo Rossellini, Father Enrico Buondonno
Sound: Eraldo Giordani, Ovidio Del Grande
Set design: Virgilio Marchi, Giuseppe Rissone
Costumes: Marina Arcangeli
Producer: Peppino Amato for Cineriz
Cast: Aldo Fabrizi, Arabella Lemaitre, and a group of Franciscan monks, including Brother Nazario Gerardi

Episode 5: **L'invidia (Envy),** in **I SETTE PECCATI CAPITALI (THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS)** (1951)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, from *La Chatte*, a novella by Colette

Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Diego Fabbri, Liana Ferri, Turi Vasile
Photography: Enzo Serafin
Editing: Louisette Hauteceour
Music: Yves Baudrier
Set design: Hugo Blaetter
Producer: Film Costellazione and Franco-London Film
Cast: Orfeo Tamburi, Andrée Debar, Nicola Ciarletta, Nino Franchina, Tanino Chiurazzi, R. M. DeAngelis

EUROPA '51 (1952)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, from a story by Rossellini, Massimo Mida, and Antonello Trombadori
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Sandro De Feo, Diego Fabbri, Ivo Perilli, Brunello Rondi, Antonio Pietrangeli, and Mario Pannunzio, with uncredited contributions by Tullio Pinelli and Federico Fellini
Photography: Aldo Tonti
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Piero Cavazzuti, Paolo Uccello
Set design: Virgilio Marchi, Ferdinando Ruffo
Costumes: Fernanda Gattinoni
Producer: Carlo Ponti–Dino De Laurentiis
Cast: Ingrid Bergman, Alexander Knox, Sandro Franchina, Ettore Giannini, Giulietta Masina, William Tubbs, Teresa Pellati

DOV'È LA LIBERTÁ . . . ? (WHERE IS LIBERTY . . . ?) (1952)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Vitaliano Brancati, Ennio Flaiano, Antonio Pietrangeli, Vincenzo Talarico
Photography: Aldo Tonti, Tonino Delli Colli
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Paolo Uccello
Set design: Flavio Mogherini, Armando Suscipi
Costumes: Antonelli and Ferroni
Producer: Ponti-De Laurentiis-Golden Films
Cast: Totò, Leopoldo Trieste, Vera Molnar, Franca Faldini, Nita Dover

Episode 3: **Ingrid Bergman,** in **SIAMO DONNE (WE, THE WOMEN)** (1953)
Subject: Cesare Zavattini
Screenplay: Cesare Zavattini, with the collaboration of Luigi Chiarini

Photography: Otello Martelli
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Alessandro Cicognini
Sound: Giorgio Pallotta
Producer: Alfredo Guarini for Titanus/Costellazione
Cast: Ingrid Bergman; Albamaria Setaccioli; Robertino, Isabella, and Isotta Rossellini

VIAGGIO IN ITALIA (VOYAGE IN ITALY) (1953)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, Vitaliano Brancati
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Vitaliano Brancati
Photography: Enzo Serafin
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Eraldo Giordani
Set design: Piero Filippone
Costumes: Fernanda Gattinoni
Producer: Roberto Rossellini for Sveva Film, Aldo Fossataro for Junior Film, Alfredo Guarini for Italia Film/Société Générale de Cinématographie/Ariane/Francinex
Cast: Ingrid Bergman, George Sanders, Paul Müller, Maria Mauban, Anna Proclemer, Leslie Daniels, Tony La Penna, Natalia Ray, Jackie Frost, Lyla Rocco, Bianca Maria Cerasoli

Episode 4: **Napoli '43 (Naples '43),** in **AMORI DI MEZZO SECOLO (MID-CENTURY LOVES).** (1953) (The title *Naples '43* does not appear in the film itself, but was used by contemporary critics.)
Subject: Carlo Infascelli
Screenplay: Oreste Biancoli, Roberto Rossellini, Vinicio Marinucci, Giuseppe Mangione, Rodolfo Sonego
Photography: Tonino Delli Colli
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti, Dolores Tamburini
Music: Carlo Rustichelli
Set design: Mario Chiari, Beni Montresor
Costumes: Maria De Matteis
Producer: Carlo Infascelli for Excelsa/Roma Film
Cast: Antonella Lualdi, Franco Pastorino, Ugo D'Alessi

GIOVANNA D'ARCO AL ROGO (JOAN OF ARC AT THE STAKE) (1954)
Subject: From the dramatic oratorio *Jeanne au bûcher*, by Paul Claudel and Arthur Honegger

Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Gabor Pogany
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Arthur Honegger
Sound: Paolo Uccello
Set design: Carlo Maria Cristini, Marcello Caracciolo
Costumes: Adriano Muojo
Producer: Giorgio Criscuolo and Franco Francese for Produzioni Cinematografiche Associate-Franco-London Film
Cast: Ingrid Bergman, Tullio Carminati, Giacinto Prandelli, Augusto Romani, Agnese Dubbini

LA PAURA (NON CREDO PIÙ ALL'AMORE) (FEAR) (1954)
Subject: Stefan Zweig's novella, *Die Angst*
Screenplay: Sergio Amidei, Roberto Rossellini, Count Franz Treuberg
Photography: Carlo Carlini, Heinz Schnackertz
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti, Walter Boos
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Carl Becker
Costumes: Jacques Griffe
Producer: Ariston Film
Cast: Ingrid Bergman, Mathias Wieman, Kurt Kreuger, Renate Mannhardt, Elise Aulinger

L'INDIA VISTA DA ROSSELLINI (INDIA SEEN BY ROSSELLINI) (1957–58)
(A 16-millimeter, 10-episode, 251–minute version of the material later edited to four episodes and 90 minutes as *India*)
Television Supervision: Giuseppe Sala
Photography: Aldo Tonti
Producer: Roberto Rossellini for the RAI-TV (Italian state television)
Cast: Nonprofessional actors

INDIA, also known as **INDIA MATRI BHUMI (INDIA, MOTHER EARTH)** (1958)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Sonali Sen Roy Das Gupta, Fereydoun Hoveyda
Photography: Aldo Tonti
Editing: Cesare Cavagna
Music: Philippe Arthuys

Producer: Roberto Rossellini, for Aniene Film and Rome-Union Générale Cinématographique
Cast: Nonprofessional actors

IL GENERALE DELLA ROVERE (GENERAL DELLA ROVERE) (1959)
Subject: Indro Montanelli
Screenplay: Sergio Amidei, Diego Fabbri, Indro Montanelli, Roberto Rossellini, Piero Zuffi
Photography: Carlo Carlini
Editing: Cesare Cavagna Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Ovidio Del Grande
Set design: Piero Zuffi
Costumes: Piero Zuffi
Producer: Morris Ergas for Zebra Film and Gaumont
Cast: Vittorio De Sica, Hannes Messemer, Sandra Milo, Giovanna Ralli, Anne Vernon, Vittorio Caprioli, Giuseppe Rossetti, Lucia Modugno, Herbert Fischer, Franco Interlenghi

ERA NOTTE A ROMA (IT WAS NIGHT IN ROME) (1960)
Subject: Sergio Amidei
Screenplay: Sergio Amidei, Diego Fabbri, Brunello Rondi, Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Carlo Carlini
Editing: Roberto Cinquini
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Enzo Magli
Set design: Flavio Mogherini, Mario Rappini
Costumes: Elio Costanzi, Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Giovan Battista Romanengo, for International Golden Star/ Genoa-Film Dismage
Cast: Leo Genn, Giovanna Ralli, Sergei Bondartchouk, Peter Baldwin, Renato Salvatori, Paolo Stoppa, Enrico Maria Salerno, Hannes Messemer, Laura Betti, Sergio Fantoni, George Petrarca

VIVA L'ITALIA (GARIBALDI) (1960)
Subject: Sergio Amidei, Carlo Alianello, Antonio Petrucci, Luigi Chiarini
Screenplay: Sergio Amidei, Diego Fabbri, Antonio Petrucci, Roberto Rossellini, Antonello Trombadori
Photography: Luciano Trasatti
Editing: Roberto Cinquini
Music: Renzo Rossellini

Sound: Enzo Magli, Oscar Di Santo
Set design: Gepy Mariani
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Tempo Film/Galatea/Francinex
Cast: Renzo Ricci, Paolo Stoppa, Franco Interlenghi, Giovanna Ralli, Tina Louise

VANINA VANINI (1961)
Subject: Stendhal's short story, *Chroniques italiennes*, adapted by Antonello Trombadori and Franco Solinas
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Diego Fabbri, Jean Gruault, Monique Lange
Photography: Luciano Trasatti
Editing: Daniele Alabiso
Music: Renzo Rossellini
Sound: Oscar De Angelis, Renato Cadueri
Set design: Luigi Scaccianoce, Riccardo Domenici
Costumes: Danilo Donati
Producer: Morris Ergas for Zebra Film and Orsay Films
Cast: Sandra Milo, Laurent Terzieff, Paolo Stoppa, Martine Carol, Leonardo Botta, Nerio Bernardi

TORINO NEI CENT'ANNI (TURIN THROUGH THE LAST HUNDRED YEARS) (1961)
Subject: Valentino Orsini
Screenplay: Valentino Orsini
Photography: Leopoldo Piccinelli, Mario Vulpiani, Mario Volpi
Editing: Vasco Micucci
Producer: PROA for the RAI-TV

ANIMA NERA (BLACK SOUL) (1962)
Subject: Adapted from the comedy by Giuseppe Patroni Griffi
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Giuseppe Patroni Griffi, Alfio Valdarnini
Photography: Luciano Trasatti
Editing: Daniele Alabiso
Music: Piero Piccioni
Set design: Elio Costanzi, Alfredo Freda
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Gianni Hecht Lucari for Documento Film/Le Louvre Film
Cast: Vittorio Gassman, Annette Stroyberg, Nadja Tiller, Eleonora Rossi Drago, Yvonne Sanson, Daniela Igliozzi, Tony Brown

Episode 1: **Illibatezza (Chastity),** in **ROGOPAG** (1962)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Luciano Trasatti
Editing: Daniele Alabiso
Music: Carlo Rustichelli
Sound: Bruno Brunacci, Luigi Puri
Set design: Flavio Mogherini
Costumes: Danilo Donati
Producer: Alfredo Bini for Arco Film/Société Lyre Cinématographique
Cast: Rosanna Schiaffino, Bruce Balaban, Carlo Zappavigna, Maria Pia Schiaffino

L'ETÀ DEL FERRO (THE IRON AGE) (directed by Renzo Rossellini, Jr., with the supervision of Roberto Rossellini, for Italian state television) (1964)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Carlo Carlini
Editing: Daniele Alabiso
Music: Carmine Rizzo
Sound: Renato Cadueri, Pietro Spladoni
Set design: Giuseppe Mariani, Ennio Michettoni
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: 22 Dicembre and Istituto Luce for RAI-TV
Cast: Nonprofessional actors

LA PRISE DE POUVOIR PAR LOUIS XIV (THE RISE TO POWER OF LOUIS XIV) (1966)
Subject: Philippe Erlanger
Screenplay: Philippe Erlanger, with dialogue by Jean Gruault
Photography: Georges Leclerc
Editing: Armand Ridel
Music: Betty Willemetz
Sound: Jacques Gayet
Set design: Maurice Valay, Pierre Gerber
Costumes: Christiane Coste, Pierre Cadot
Producer: Radiodiffusion Francaise (ORTF-French state television)
Cast: Jean-Marie Patte, Raymond Jourdan, Katharina Renn, Giulio Cesare Silvani, Dominique Vincent, Pierre Barrat

IDEA DI UNISOLA (ROBERTO ROSSELLINI'S SICILY) (1967)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Mario Fioretti
Editing: Maria Rosada
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Producer: Renzo Rossellini, Jr., for Orizzonte 2000, in collaboration with the RAI-TV for NBC Television

LA LOTTA DELL'UOMO PER LA SUA SOPRAVVIVENZA (MAN'S STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL) (directed by Renzo Rossellini, Jr., with the supervision of Roberto Rossellini) (1967–69)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini
Photography: Mario Fioretti
Editing: Daniele Alabiso, Gabriele Alessandro, Alfredo Muschietti
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Set design: Giuseppe Mariani, Virgil Moise, Ennio Michettoni, Giusto Puri Purini, Eugenio Saverio, Jurie Vasile
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: RAI-TV and Orrizonte 2000/Logos Film/Romania Film/Corpo Film
Cast: Nonprofessional actors

ATTI DEGLI APOSTOLI (THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES) (1968)
Subject: Acts of the Apostles, the fifth book of the New Testament
Screenplay: Vittorio Bonicelli, Jean-Dominique de la Rochefoucauld, Roberto Rossellini, Luciano Scaffa
Photography: Mario Fioretti
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Sound: Gianni Mazzarini
Set Design: Giuseppe Mariani, Carmelo Patrono, Elio Costanzi, Alessandro Gioia, Dino Leonetti
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Roberto Rossellini, for Orizzonte 2000/RAI-TV/ORTF-TVE Madrid/Studio Hamburg/Les Films de Carthage (Tunisia)
Cast: Edoardo Torricella, Jacques Dumur, Renzo Rossi, Mohamed Kouka, Bradai Ridha

SOCRATE (SOCRATES) (1970)
Subject: adapted by Roberto Rossellini and Maria Grazia Bornigia from the *Dialogues* of Plato and works by Xenophon, Diogenes, and others
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, with dialogues by Jean-Dominique de la Rochefoucauld
Photography: Jorge Herrero Martin
Editing: Alfredo Muschietti
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Sound: Jesus Paralta Navarro
Set design: Giusto Puri Purini, Bernardo Ballester
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Roberto Rossellini, for Orizzonte 2000/RAI-TV/ORTF-TVE Madrid
Cast: Jean Sylvére, Anne Caprile Ricardo Palacios, Bepy Mannaiuolo

LA FORZA E LA RAGIONE (INTERVISTA A SALVATORE ALLENDE) (FORCE AND REASON [INTERVIEW WITH SALVADOR ALLENDE]) (an interview conducted in May 1971 by Rossellini, assisted by Emilio Greco) (1971)
Directors: Helvio Soto, Emidio Greco
Photography: Roberto Girometti
Sound: Antonio Russello
Producer: Orizzonte 2000

BLAISE PASCAL (1972)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa, with dialogue by Jean-Dominique de la Rochefoucauld
Photography: Mario Fioretti
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Sound: Carlo Tarchi
Set design: Franco Velchi
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis, with the collaboration of Isabella Rossellini
Producer: Roberto Rossellini for Orizzonte 2000/RAI-TV/ORTF
Cast: Pierre Arditi, Giuseppe Addobbati, Rita Forzano, Teresa Ricci, Claude Baks, Tullio Valli

AGOSTINO D'IPPONA (AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO) (1972)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa, with dialogues by Jean-Dominique de la Rochefoucauld
Photography: Mario Fioretti
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Sound: Carlo Tarchi
Set design: Franco Velchi
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Roberto Rossellini for Orizzonte 2000/RAI-TV
Cast: Dary Berkany, Virginio Gazzolo, Cesare Barbetti, Bruno Cattaneo, Leonardo Fioravanti, Bepy Mannaiuolo

L'ETÀ DI COSIMO DE' MEDICI (THE AGE OF THE MEDICI) (1972)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa
Photography: Mario Montuori
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Manuel De Sica
Sound: Carlo Tarchi
Set design: Franco Velchi, Ezio Di Monte
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Roberto Rossellini for Orizzonte 2000/RAI-TV
Cast: Marcello Di Falco, Virginio Gazzolo, Tom Felleghi, Mario Erpichini

CARTESIO (DESCARTES) (1973)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa, with the assistance of Ferdinand Alquié
Photography: Mario Montuori
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Sound: Tommaso Quattrini
Set design: Giuseppe Mangano
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Roberto Rossellini for Orizzonte 2000/RAI-TV/ORTF

Cast: Ugo Cardea, Anne Pouchie, Claude Berthy, Gabriele Banchero, John Stacy, Charles Borromel

ANNO UNO (ITALY: YEAR ONE) (1974)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Marcella Mariani, Luciano Scaffa
Photography: Mario Montuori
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Sound: Tommaso Quattrini, Franco De Arcangelis
Set design: Giuseppe Mangano
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Rusconi Film
Cast: Luigi Vannucchi, Dominique Darel, Valeria Sabel, Ennio Balbo, Tino Bianchi, Francesco Di Federico, Luciano Gaudenzio, Paolo Bonacelli

THE WORLD POPULATION (documentary filmed by Rossellini for the United Nations, assisted by Beppe Cino) (1974)
Editing: Beppe Cino
Producer: United Nations

IL MESSIA (THE MESSIAH) (1975)
Subject: Roberto Rossellini, Silvia D'Amico Bendicò
Screenplay: Roberto Rossellini, Silvia D'Amico Bendicò
Photography: Mario Montuori
Editing: Jolanda Benvenuti
Music: Mario Nascimbene
Sound: Alain Contrault, Tommaso Quattrini
Set design: Giorgio Bertolini, Giovanni Del Drago, Osvaldo Desideri
Costumes: Marcella De Marchis
Producer: Silvia D'Amico Bendicò for Orizzonte 2000/Procinex
Cast: Pier Maria Rossi, Mita Ungaro, Carlos de Carvalho, Yatsugi Khelil, Jean Martin

CONCERTO PER MICHELANGELO (CONCERT FOR MICHELANGELO) (1977)
Photography: Mario Montuori
Music: Domenico Bartolucci
Sound: Vincenzo Sirena
Producer: RAI-TV, Channel 2

LE CENTRE GEORGES POMPIDOU (THE GEORGES POMPIDOU CENTER FOR ART AND CULTURE) (1977)
Photography: Nestor Almendros
Editing: Véritable Silve, Colette Le Tallec, Dominique Taysse
Sound: Philippe Lemenuel, Michel Berthez
Producer: Jacques Grandclaude for Création 9 Information–Film Jacques Grandclaude

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